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THE STATED PURPOSE OF THIS CURRICULUM BULLETIN IS TO PROVIDE AN ACCOUNT OF THE NEGRO AS A PARTICIPANT IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES TO AID TEACHERS IN RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUMS FOR GIVING INSTRUCTION ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MINORITY GROUPS TO AMERICAN LIFE. IT SPECIFICALLY DEALS WITH SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL FORCES WITHIN THE NEGRO COMMUNITY AND THEIR IMPACT ON NATIONAL AND WORLD EVENTS, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE HISTORY OF NEGROES IN NEW YORK CITY. INFORMATION BASED ON THE CURRENT SCHOLARLY CONSENSUS IS OFFERED ON SLAVERY IN THE OLD WORLD, THE AFRICAN BACKGROUND OF SLAVERY, THE SLAVE TRADE, AND THE NEGRO IN LATIN AMERICA. THE BULK OF THE BULLETIN IS DEVOTED TO A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO FROM 1619 TO THE PRESENT. A BIBLIOGRAPHY LISTS GENERAL WORKS AND STUDIES RELEVANT TO EACH CHAPTER OF THE BULLETIN. THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE FROM BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, PUBLICATIONS SALES OFFICE, 110 LIVINGSTON ST., BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201, FOR $1.00. (NH)

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The Negro in American History

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FOREWORD

The American Negro is today a central figure in a drama of vast proportions. Around him rages a social revolution unprecedented in American history. Taking place within the context of a world-wide struggle for human rights, this revolution involves a massive recasting of roles and relationships across ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic lines. At its heart lies the destruction of the inequalities of practice and theory that have long alienated a substantial portion of the American people.

The current civil rights revolution has raised many fundamental questions involving the essence of quality education and the role of the school in preparing children for full, responsible citizenship. In fact, it has compelled the schools to reassess their entire educational program. As part of this reassessment, studies have been made of the extent to which history textbooks in use in schools and colleges include adequate treatment of the role of the Negro in American history. They indicate that many textbooks either distort or omit important information on the history and achievement of Negroes. The October 9, 1962 policy statement of the Superintendent of Schools referred to such deficiencies in calling upon publishers to present "a comprehensive and satisfactory picture of the status of minority groups in our culture."

The Negro in American History is designed to give teachers, and through them their students, a broader and more factual statement on the Negro in our nation's history. Its basic aim is to promote a better understanding of America's past by developing increased awareness of the history of American Negroes, their problems, and their accomplishments – both individually and as a group. Together with other appropriate materials, this bulletin should aid teachers in recognizing and responding to the many opportunities in our curricula for effective instruction on the contributions of minority groups to American life. Its use by teachers should further the development of democratic attitudes and encourage appreciation for those cultural values which are a part of our national heritage.

Prejudice and misunderstandings invariably result from the lack of knowledge. It is our hope that a better understanding of the role of the Negro in our history and culture will contribute to intergroup harmony and that our schools will continue to produce leaders capable of maintaining and securing those rights and liberties which all Americans cherish.

JOSEPH O. LORETAN
Deputy Superintendent

July, 1964

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The Negro in American History could not have been written without the researches of many scholars who have contributed significant writings to the field. They have performed invaluable and indispensible services for all students of history. Many, but not all, of their names and major works appear in the bibliography for this bulletin. Appreciation is expressed to them, and to others now engaged in expanding our knowledge of the past.

This publication resulted from the proposals of an *ad hoc* committee of teachers and supervisors formed to assess current curriculum materials dealing with minority groups. Its members were:

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INTRODUCTION

This bulletin seeks to provide teachers with a brief, balanced account of the Negro as a participant in our nation's history. It attempts to identify the major historical forces which have influenced the Negro American community and to describe that community's impact upon broader national and international developments.

Every effort was made to make this bulletin as informative as possible. This was no easy task. The explosion of knowledge which today characterizes almost every field of historical inquiry has brought forth a number of new and significant studies relating to the American Negro and these have multiplied the historical data and the interpretive materials with which present scholars and students must deal. Since an abundance of source materials presents almost as many difficulties as a scarcity, those responsible for this publication have had to exercise even greater selectivity than usual and limitations of space have compounded their difficulties. It is hoped that the reader will consult the many authoritative studies and monographs now available on Negro history for more specialized information. A selection of these appears in the bibliography.

Since this bulletin was planned primarily for the use of New York City teachers, special consideration was given to certain developments in Negro history which relate to the history of New York City, or which appear to have particular applicability to the various curricular objectives of our schools. Thus, an effort was made to incorporate materials dealing with Negro New Yorkers during the colonial, early national, and post-Civil War periods. In addition, accounts are given of outstanding individual achievements in music, art, literature, labor, industry, science, and other fields and professions that relate to the vocational and avocational interests of our students. Such information adds to historical perspectives and should prove useful to teachers planning instruction in the various areas of the curriculum.

The focus of *The Negro in American History* is, of course, on the Negro in United States history. Nevertheless, the history of American Negroes, like that of all other minority groups in a nation of immigrants, was affected by events that occurred long before the discovery of America and in parts of the world far removed from the United States. Continuity is almost axiomatic in history; to understand institutions associated with the Negro in America, one must look into their origins and evolution in places and at times other than our own. This bulletin thus includes background information on slavery in the Old World, on the cultural traditions of the West African peoples prior to the slave trade to the New World, and on the Negro in Latin America during that continent's colonial and post-revolutionary periods. While these subjects may not appear to the general reader to be strictly germane to the story of American Negroes, important aspects of that story would be less meaningful without some knowledge of them and, for this reason, if not for their own intrinsic values, they are treated here.

As is the case in almost all areas of historical inquiry, scholars differ in their interpretations of certain key developments in Negro history. Where there is scholarly consensus, the interpretation presented here reflects that consensus. Where opinions differ, every effort has been made to indicate this and, whenever appropriate, to summarize the varying interpretations offered by contemporary scholars. On questions for which the available information is inadequate, judgment must await future research and scholarship.

Special effort was made to free this publication from the biases which have marred other accounts of the American Negro, to maintain the standards and worthwhile traditions of modern scholarship, and to present a simplified account of a highly complex history. If, through this study of Negro history, the reader perceives an added dimension to the remarkable story of man and gains from it increased respect for the human potential, then this bulletin will have accomplished its purpose.

Chapter 1

SLAVERY IN THE OLD WORLD: A BACKGROUND

The majority of Negroes who lived in the United States before 1865 lived as slaves. This, of course, is a fact central not only to our national history prior to the Civil War but to relations between white and Negro Americans ever since that time. Although the legal institution of slavery no longer exists as such in the United States, Americans today continue to taste its bitter fruits; its poisons persist in the area of interracial relationships and in the psychological outlooks of whites and Negroes born long after the demise of America's "peculiar institution."

For these reasons, a knowledge of the history of slavery is essential to an understanding of the role of the Negro in American life. And to understand the period of Negro servitude as it evolved in the New World, it is necessary to turn to the Old World and to examine slavery within the various cultures in which Western civilization is rooted. Major practices and rationalizations associated with American Negro slavery originated within these cultures and long before slavery became identified with America and with the Negro.

SLAVERY IN PREHISTORIC AND ANCIENT TIMES

Slavery, strangely enough, was a product of civilized man rather than of prehistoric man. Its origin is associated with the development of the urban-agricultural economies which characterized the earliest civilizations in Egypt, the Middle East, and Asia. It was unknown among prehistoric men who depended upon hunting, fishing, and food gathering and who sought to sustain themselves on a day-to-day basis. The discovery of planting and herding transformed the nomadic life of the hunter into the more settled life of the villager and ultimately the city dweller, and the necessity to produce surplus agricultural and industrial products under these conditions made human slavery profitable. Few, if any, of the ancient cultures were able to carry on large-scale productive enterprise without the use of slave labor.

In the earliest times, slaves were almost universally acquired through warfare. In this connection, slavery may be regarded as a preferable substitute for the more primitive practice of torturing and murdering one's captives. As Will Durant has noted, "it was a great moral improvement when men ceased to kill or eat their fellow men and merely made them slaves." Thus, in its earliest form, slavery was not associated with a particular race or people; the slave was invariably a "foreigner" captured in war and compelled to work for his captors unless a satisfactory ransom was negotiated. Generally, he was part of a larger group of such captives – the entire population of captured cities was often enslaved – and was more frequently held in ownership by the state rather than by individual owners. As civilization developed and as the need for inexpensive labor became more acute, slavery was extended to defaulting debtors, obstinate criminals, and abandoned children. Individual ownership was encouraged by the introduction of slave trading and slave markets. In the more advanced cultures, the practice of conducting raids to capture slaves became widespread; to acquire an adult slave capable of immediate employment was thought to be less expensive than to raise a slave child from infancy. As raids grew more numerous, the warfare which gave birth to slavery ultimately became its result.

As will be seen later, there were many variations in the status and well-being of slaves among the ancient cultures. It is possible, nevertheless, to detect an over-all pattern in the evolution of slavery in the ancient world. In its initial phases, slavery may be seen as a means of transferring the product of labor above the minimum necessary for subsistence to those who held control over the slaves. In a later stage, slave ownership in itself became one of the chief attributes of power and most slaves were possessed by the state or by the ruling class which monopolized the powers of the state. As city-states embarked upon empire-building and extensive warfare, the number of slaves increased and institutions and practices associated with slavery grew more complex. Individual ownership during this later phase introduced a new low in hardship, privation, and misery among slaves.

Slavery increased wealth and created leisure for a minority, thus making possible many of the material and intellectual achievements of bygone civilizations. Some historians maintain that it gave man traditions and habits of toil, possibly the beginning of a work-ethic which later may have contributed to the industrial growth characteristic of modern times. But if slavery did these things, the cost was high in terms of the corruption, the hatred, the degradation, and the brutality it unleashed.

Slavery in Ancient Egypt and the Middle East

The widespread popularity of Old Testament stories, historical fiction, and motion pictures dealing with ancient Egypt has made the story of slavery in the later days of the Pharaohs a familiar one to the general public and it need not be elaborated upon here. Unfortunately, current historical scholarship confirms much of the severity associated with the institution as it developed along the Nile – the use of untold numbers of peasants and slaves as work gangs in the construction of tombs, temples, and pyramids; the enslavement of entire captive populations; the harsh treatment meted out to slave workers by overseers and officials; and the rest. Probably less well known is the belief, widely held among scholars, that the growth of slavery in Egypt tended to parallel that of the empire itself, increasing with territorial expansion into Nubia, Syria, and the Near East and diminishing during times of relative peace or with the decline of Egyptian hegemony. This pattern is repeated in the history of other ancient empires, including those of Greece and Rome.

That the Egyptian slaves' lot was a difficult one is substantiated by knowledge of at least two major slave revolts. According to one Greek tradition, a great slave revolt occurred in which slaves captured an Egyptian province and held it so long that they ultimately acquired legal title to the land it encompassed. While Egyptian slavery was generally harsh and oppressive, it should be remembered that the slave's life was not much harder than that of an Egyptian farmer. A gang or field slave, if he were fortunate, could be chosen to serve in a household, a temple, or in a craft. And, if he were unusually clever, he might earn his freedom and seek a higher status within the society, thus emulating Joseph, the Biblical patriarch. There is no evidence that significant numbers of slaves actually pursued such a career.

Slavery was as equally well established within the various cultures of the "Fertile Crescent" of ancient Mesopotamia as in Egypt. "A great slave-class," according to one historian, "moved like a swelling subterranean river underneath the Babylonian state." Assyrian slaves, captured in war or enslaved for debt, were differentiated from the rest of the population by having their ears pierced and their heads shaved. They performed most of the menial labor throughout the empire. Gibbon reports that the Phoenicians, those inveterate sailors and merchants of ancient times, enslaved many of the natives of Spain. In his words, "Spain, by a very singular fatality, was the Peru and Mexico of the old world."

The famous code of Hammurabi, who ruled in Babylon around 1940 B.C., deals extensively with slavery. The position of slaves is carefully defined: slaves were to be branded and required to wear a special dress; they were subject to severe punishment for running away or for attack-ing a free man. Invariably, more severe punishment was given a slave than a free man convicted for a similar offense. Although Hammurabi's code is correctly regarded as a harsh one, it did provide slaves with three days of rest each month and allowed them to acquire and own property and to buy their freedom. Masters were denied the right of life and death over their slaves – a proscription characteristic of many ancient cultures.

Even the Hebrews, a people who by tradition knew well the evils of slavery, succumbed to this universal practice of the ancient world. Under the Hebrews, however, slavery was neither widespread nor oppressive. Enjoined to "proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," the Hebrews practiced a considerably milder form of slavery than that known elsewhere at that time. Thus, the owner was denied power of life and death over his slaves; the enslavement of Hebrews for debt was severely restricted or prohibited outright and Hebrew slaves were to be freed after six years. The Sabbath code applied to the slave as well as the free, and it was provided that on the Jubilee, which occurred every fifty years, all Hebrew slaves and debtors should be given their freedom. Furthermore, runaway slaves given refuge by others could not be compelled to return to their masters while emancipated slaves were to be given funds so that they could become self-supporting. American slaveholders who later asserted Scriptural condonement of slavery in their defense of the institution invariably ignored the many restrictions placed upon the Hebrew master in his dealings with slaves.

SLAVERY IN ANCIENT GREECE

There is general agreement among scholars with regard to the relative mildness of slave life among the Athenian Greeks. The traditional interpretation is that the Athenian slave was "a species of poor relation" whose life differed little from that of the poorer citizen. In the Homeric period, at least, slaves were not numerous nor was their position degraded. Most were female domestics who normally were accepted as members of the family. Even when slavery became more widespread and possibly more distasteful, slaves could not be put to death by their masters; if slaves felt themselves cruelly treated, they could compel their sale to another master who, hopefully, would treat them more kindly. Some slaves were even given minor official duties, such as policing the city. In the Periclean Age, some slaves were employed as teachers, trusted household servants, and skilled artisans, though the vast majority were given menial tasks to perform.

There is some difference of scholarly opinion with regard to the manumission of slaves among the Athenians. The prevalent view is that the Athenians, recognizing that the promise of freedom served as an economic stimulus to a young slave, frequently rewarded loyal and diligent slaves with their liberty. The practice of providing for the manumission of slaves in the wills of masters is often cited in support of this point of view. Some historians, however, take exception to this interpretation. Ralph Turner, for example, attributed it to nineteenth century historical romanticism and pointed out that "the Greeks were too poor and the slaves too expensive to permit the existence of this kindly feeling and action." Slavery, he concluded, was "necessary to the maintenance of Greek life" and "never showed the slightest tendency to disappear." Other historians believe that those manumitted were usually too old or too ill to be of further economic service.

Most of the outstanding Greek philosophers and writers condoned slavery. Aristotle, for example, held that some men were "naturally slaves for whom the condition of slavery was alike expedient and just." Xenophon justified slavery since it released others from "physical enervation," giving them "leisure to devote to the claims of friendship and the state." In general, the enslavement of fellow Greeks was frowned upon but it occurred nevertheless. Zeno, the only major thinker to condemn slavery, was a voice in the wilderness.

That slavery was a fundamental aspect of the Greek way of life is borne out by population studies of Athens when it reached the height of its power under the leadership of Pericles in the fifth century B.C. The slaves were the most numerous group within the city, numbering an estimated 115,000 out of a total population of 315,000. And while slavery may have reflected the mildness of the Athenian temperament, its evils flourished under the Spartans and the number of its victims multiplied within the Macedonian Empire of Philip and Alexander the Great. In fact, the slave trade was probably the richest branch of commerce in the Hellenistic world, centering first in Athens, then Delos, and finally in Rhodes. The revolutionary spirit which developed within the Greek cities of the Macedonian Empire resulted in part from the widespread practice of enslavement for debt and its intensification led to a stricter and harsher enforcement of slave codes. Philip of Macedon, fearing the possibility of uprisings, found it necessary to forbid the liberation of slaves by revolutionary action.

SLAVERY IN THE DAYS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Within the despotisms of ancient Egypt and the Middle East, human slavery was the chief source of labor power and an important status symbol. Among the Hebrews, it was prevalent enough to bring forth a variety of legal and religious proscriptions as well as a serious challenge to a traditional antipathy toward human bondage. Among the Athenians, it was accepted with some reservation and it ultimately became a flourishing institution of the Alexandrian empire. And under the Romans, it was thought of as a positive good, a wholesome and essential device that provided a way of life worthy of the Roman genius. It was inevitable that in ancient times slavery was to reach its nadir within the Roman world.

The growth of Roman slavery paralleled that of the city and the spread of its influence over Italy, the Mediterranean littoral, Western Europe, and Asia Minor. It is reported as a relatively mild institution when slave and master worked the farm together in the early days of Roman history and it became more oppressive and cruel when masters left estates to live in the city. As Roman power heightened and as slavery became more extensive, free labor was driven out. The slaves ultimately learned all the skills of the republic and empire while the masters lost theirs.

The lot of the rural Roman slave was typically worse than that of his urban counterpart. Violence begat violence on the *latifundia* where slaves were branded, shackled, frequently lashed by brutal free or slave overseers and locked into dank farm prisons at night. Even in the cities, violence and brutality ruled. A whole household of slaves, sometimes numbering a dozen or more, would automatically suffer torture and execution for the actual or alleged murder of the master by one. And the authority of the master, whether he resided in Rome or on his estates, was complete and unquestionable.

More slaves were probably worked to death than put to death. The worst treatment, not unexpectedly, was given to field slaves, mine slaves, galley slaves and to gang slaves who were hired by contract with their masters. "Slaves are machines with voices," wrote Varro, and the attitude inherent in this description was to affect all the slaves from the most degraded field hand or gladiator to the sensitive Greek artist or pedagogue who helped bring Hellenic culture to Rome.

History records that slave revolts were numerous and that the fear of revolt was widespread among the slave-owning classes of the Roman world. Revolts occurred most frequently in the slave pens of Asia Minor, Greece, and Sicily. The revolt led by Spartacus in 73 B.C., the most famous of these outbreaks, involved some 70,000 men of whom an estimated 6,000 were ultimately crucified, and it was neither the first nor the last of such occurrences.

During the two centuries of the Pax Romana, ending about 200 A.D., the number of slaves obtained through warfare declined as the number of wars declined. Consequently, slave-breeding became an important industry during this period, particularly in Greece and the East.

With the introduction and spread of Christianity there was some improvement in the lot of slaves. Although Christian theology accepted the institution itself, it endowed the slave's labor, as all labor, with virtue. It offered the slave the hope of freedom, not in the "sun city" of Spartacus and the other slave leaders, but in the "heavenly city" of the hereafter. That slaves and freedmen (emancipated slaves) were among the first recipients and transmitters of the "religion of brotherly love" is not surprising; it gave them their souls and granted them spiritual if not actual emancipation.

Although the early Christians regarded slavery with opprobrium, their leaders did not modify the legality of slavery nor were the working conditions of slaves substantially improved as Christian influence increased. Christians did encourage manumission as a charitable work, however, and, since they regarded marriage as a sacrament, the sanctity of the slave's marriage and family life received new recognition. Christians, nevertheless, could and did own slaves. "They that have believing masters," said St. Paul, "let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved." Christians did oppose the practice of selling children into slavery for debt as well as the enslavement of abandoned or exposed children.

Slavery from the Middle Ages to Modern Times

During the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., serfdom began to supplant chattel slavery as a system of forced labor. In its various medieval forms, serfdom was to persist in western Europe and in Russia until the 19th century, if not later. Under this system, the farmer was "bound to the land" and spent much of his time tilling his lord's fields without pay. Although he had few freedoms and no voice in feudal laws, his permanent attachment to a particular manor at least had the virtue of keeping his family intact. Christians accepted serfdom with less objection than slavery, possibly because its customs – those associated with life in a peasant village – were less cruel than the harsh practices of urban slavery as it had developed in earlier times.

The triumph of manorialism, feudalism, and Christianity did not end chattel slavery in Europe, however, and it persisted throughout the Middle Ages. During and following the Crusades, slavery flourished in Sicily, southern Italy, Spain, and Portugal, the enslaved in these areas being drawn largely from the ranks of the Moslem "infidels." And, as is well known, Christians were themselves enslaved by the Barbary pirates and their other Islamic captors. Much of the slavery during this period was based upon religious differences between master and slave rather than upon status in war's aftermath or ethnic or national origins. When Portuguese explorers first brought Negro slaves to Europe in 1442, Christianity had already been used as an excuse to enslave Moslems and other non-Christians and religious motives were to play no insignificant role in the justification of Negro slavery after that time.

Slavery was not, of course, an exclusive feature of Western civilization. It is thought to have appeared in the more advanced Indian cultures of the Americas. Although there is little or no evidence of an organized slave trade in ancient China, some slavery was practiced; children sold during times of famine, and war prisoners, constituted its principal sources. The forced labor exacted of the Chinese peasants may have more than sufficed as a substitute for chattel slavery. The available evidence indicates that slaves in China were not treated severely and were permitted to purchase their freedom. In India, as in China, slavery was neither extensive nor oppressive and this may also be attributed in part to a sufficiency of inexpensive labor. Under Akbar the Great, the Mogul emperor who ruled India at the end of the sixteenth century A.D., the slavery of captives was abolished. None of these non-Western cultures ever developed an agricultural or industrial slavery comparable to that of the Romans.

With the beginning of the African slave trade in the fifteenth century, slavery, an institution which was known in almost every ancient culture in the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and pre-Columbian America, was to undergo a vast and rapid transformation. Its center of operation was to shift to the Western Hemisphere and its almost exclusive source of supply was to be the Negro peoples of Africa south of the Sahara. The Age of Exploration and Discovery, inaugurating a new era for western Europe and its civilization, marked also the beginning of Africa's degradation and destruction by the European explorer, merchant, colonizer and slaver.

Chapter 2

THE AFRICAN HERITAGE

When the African came to the New World he brought with him distinctive cultural traditions which may be traced almost to the dawn of civilization. He was not, as myth would have it, the simple, unsophisticated aborigine of the West African coast lacking the attributes and heritage of centuries of cultural developments such as those that evolved within the framework of Western civilization. Despite the myth's persistence in popular literature and folklore, archeologists and anthropologists, if not historians, discarded it long ago. And just as we must know the origins and early practices of slavery in order to understand the course of Negro history following the fifteenth century, so, too, we must consider some of the major traditions of the various African cultures under which the Negro once lived, for in varying degrees these were to continue to influence his life and those of others in the New World.

The widespread lack of accurate information about African history and culture among the people of the United States today is not without its own special significance in Negro-American history. Perpetuated by many textbooks in use at all levels of our educational system, past misconceptions about the African heritage may be attributed in part to the relative paucity of sound scholarship in African studies in both the popular and scholarly literature on this subject. They may also be ascribed to bias and bigotry existing within the halls of Academe. Until recent times, the geographic isolation of the African continent and the colonial status of its people also obscured its cultural values and achievements, while the Negro's servitude and precarious social position following emancipation were themselves considered as sufficient proof of the innate "primitivism" and "inferiority" of Africa and its cultures.

The tremendous impact of recent revolutionary changes in Africa, in the United States, and, indeed, throughout the entire world has altered traditional patterns of thought and has stimulated considerable public and scholarly interest in African history and culture. The creation of independent African nations, the intensification of social and cultural awareness among the peoples of these developing nations, the growth of a sense of historical-mindedness here and abroad, and the dissemination through mass media of considerable information by and about Africans of various cultures and races — all have contributed to the revival of interest in Africa's past and present. Using the criteria of modern scholarship and the realities of cultural history that are available to us, a picture of the African heritage of twenty million Americans emerges which can be compared favorably with those of other ethnic or national groups. When regarded as achievements of mankind with inherent values of their own, Africa's attainments, wrung as they were from a relatively isolated environment, may well merit the attention and praise of men everywhere.

Exploring the African Past

It is no easy task to explore Africa's past. Notwithstanding the myths and misconceptions that continuously impede such studies, the historian of Africa must contend with many unique and difficult factors as he proceeds with his work. He must, for example, work with primary source materials other than writings, for Africans south of the Sahara did not generally develop written languages. He must, in fact, define the "Africa" with which he means to deal. As a continent, Africa would include ancient Egypt and the lands bordering the Mediterranean as well as those south of the Sahara. If he wishes to study the "African" people, he must consider that the African Negro shared his continent with the Semitic tribes and the Hamitic peoples of the north and that biological and cultural fusion, a common human occurrence, took place throughout Africa from the earliest times. If he focuses upon the African Negro, he will find evidence of his dispersal in almost every culture of the ancient Middle East and the Mediterranean world, as well as fundamental physical and cultural differences among the Negro peoples of the African continent itself. Possibly the only fact about Africa which is not seriously disputed today is that the oldest known human remains are to be found there and, despite Darwin's belief in man's African origins, even this is subject to future discoveries in other parts of the world.

Nevertheless, it is possible to reconstruct certain aspects of Negro history in Africa without sacrificing sound historical scholarship. Egyptologists have long been aware of Negro influence within that ancient "cradle of civilization." The Nile River which continues to give the modern Egyptian state its life blood undoubtedly carried Negro tribesmen from the Nubian desert and Ethiopia northward to slavery and, later, to sovereignty. At least one Negro Pharaoh, Ra Nahesi, is known to have occupied the Egyptian throne and, during the second millennium before Christ, Negro officials served in positions of responsiblility and honor in the Egyptian government. Nefertari, the wife of Ahmose I and co-founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, has been portrayed as a Negro woman of extraordinary beauty and exceptional administrative ability. During the eighth century before Christ, Ethiopian control over Egypt was established and it lasted for almost a century until the time of the Assyrian conquest. Ethiopia, in fact, preserved much of Egypt's culture following this period and in this respect duplicated the historic role of Rome with regard to Greek culture.

THE WEST AFRICAN KINGDOMS: GHANA, MELLE, SONGHAY

During the past few decades substantial progress has been made in uncovering the history of West Africa prior to the period of the European slave trade and colonization. Much of this history is the story of three kingdoms – Ghana, Melle, and Songhay – each of which developed and transmitted distinctive cultural traditions.

Among the early Negro states to arise in West Africa, and the first for which extensive records exist, was Ghana. Although Ghana was populated by several ethnic groups, Negroes predominated and exercised political power throughout its history. Much of Ghana's known history occurred between the fourth and the eleventh centuries of the Christian era but its founding probably took place before that era began. When the kingdom reached the height of its power during the reign of Tenkamenin in the eleventh century, its political institutions resembled those of the European monarchies of the seventeenth century more than the feudal states which characterized European government at that time. An essentially agrarian economic system prevailed and an elaborate system of taxation was used to support the king and the bureaucracy. Ghana's foreign trade was extensive by the eleventh century and its merchants were known in such distant places as Baghdad and Cairo. As Islamic influences increased among its ruling classes, trade with other Islamic peoples grew proportionately. In 1076, however, a band of fanatical Mohammedans, the Almoravides, invaded Ghana and the religious strife that followed undermined the kingdom. Economic declines and droughts ended Ghana's power and prestige by the thirteenth century.

Melle, another Negro kingdom in West Africa, came into prominence with Ghana's decline and it flourished until the fifteenth century. Here, too, Islamic cultural influences were strongest among the ruling groups, and although the economy was also agrarian, the people of Melle became renowned for their weaving, construction, and mining.

Songhay, the Negro kingdom which had subjugated most of West Africa by the time of Columbus' first voyage to the New World, probably achieved the greatest political and economic progress of all the kingdoms in that area. Since Songhay was an Islamic state, the administration of justice was based on Koranic law. Banks, commercial credit, and uniform standards of weights and measures were well-developed economic institutions in Songhay, while schools were everywhere established and supported. At the University of Sankore, Arabic, geography, Sudanese literature, law, and surgery were studied. Songhay's greatest period was during the reign of King Askia Mohammed (1493-1529), and its decline, initiated by a period of civil war, was hastened and completed by the hostilities and utimate triumph of Moor invaders from the north. There were numerous lesser states in West Africa in addition to Ghana, Melle, and Songhay; among these were the confederations of the Mossi and the Hausa States, which were powerful enough to escape the domination of Melle and Songhay, and which were able to maintain sufficient strength to resist Islamic and European control until the nineteenth century. The lack of adequate historical information and the migratory habits of many of the cultural groups makes it difficult to reconstruct the history of the African states below the equator, although sufficient archaeological and anthropological evidence exists to conclude that advanced cultures developed in many areas of Central and South Africa.

AFRICAN CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Cultural and historical developments in Africa, as elsewhere, cannot be understood apart from the geographic setting in which they occurred; fortunately, modern scholarship sheds considerable new light on this aspect of the African story. For example, the Sahara Desert, roughly the size of the United States, was once thought to have impeded contacts and the sharing of ideas between different cultures but evidence exists today of considerable exchanges across its not-too-barren reaches. The coastal waters and interior river systems of Africa were, of course, more conducive to cultural fusion. Empires grew where great natural barriers were absent, such as in West Africa, while smaller more isolated communities developed where they were present.

The absence of mountain barriers throughout much of the continent results in an uneven seasonal and yearly distribution of rain and an area which may receive plenty of rain one year may suffer severe drought the next. As we have seen, extended droughts contributed to the economic collapse of a once-flourishing Ghana. "Jungles" or tropical rainforests occur in coastal strips, in the northern Congo and its contiguous territories, and in West Africa, but these are less dense than rainforests in Southeast Asia or South America. By far the most prevalent type of vegetation cover in Africa is savanna, or grassland with scattered trees, and it is very favorable to hunting, herding, and planting; these pastoral activities were therefore to shape the economies of most African cultures. Iron was the most important mineral resource in these early economies and its use was widespread and well-developed. Most scholars today, in fact, believe its use within the African cultures preceded its discovery and development elsewhere. And as indicated earlier, there was considerable commerce between individual cultures within Africa and with other cultures bordering the continent.

Within the agricultural economies of early Africa, land ownership was an important aspect of economic affairs and vital to prosperity. Typically, land was owned by the community rather than by the individual and, even when individual use was granted, it frequently reverted back to the community if the land was abused or if its owner was no longer able to work it.

Although the African economies were essentially agrarian, arts and crafts were widely practiced and constituted an important aspect of economic life. Basketry, weaving, pottery-making, woodwork, and metallurgy were particularly well-developed, and the art work used to decorate these products, as well as that created for religious and aesthetic purposes, indicates the development of considerable artistic skill and high standards of achievement. African art objects are universally prized today and have influenced contemporary art styles and techniques.

Numerous governmental institutions developed in Africa. We have already seen how complex monarchies evolved in Ghana, Meile, and Songhay in early West Africa; the royal courts, capital cities, government ministries, national armies, provincial officialdoms, social classes and all the other refinements of absolutist power that developed in this region bear comparison with those of earlier and later states in the Middle East and in Europe.

Elsewhere in Africa somewhat simpler political systems developed. In East Africa, for example, a fairly extensive form of republican government emerged in which the people, separated into a number of age-groups, were assigned specific rights and responsibilities. Political authority here was vested, not in an hereditary ruler, but in the group which was second from the top in the age-group hierarchy, the top group consisting of elders and advisers who exercised no political power at all. Even in the lesser states of Africa kings ruled by consensus and the powers of the hereditary royal family were circumscribed by those of an electing family, which chose the royal successor, and an enthroning family, which could delay or prevent the king-designate's actual accession to the throne. Local headmen within clans or kinship groups enjoyed leadership and some prestige but not authority, since this was vested in a council of elders or family heads. Political institutions in Africa thus featured considerable division of authority and a wide variety of forms and Negroes brought with them to the New World political experiences of every type and complexity.

Slavery was known and practiced within some of the African tribes and kingdoms prior to the slave trade to the New World. It was part of the traditional way of life and, as in Greece or Rome, it was devoid of racial connotations – the concept of "race" as it is held today was absent from the multi-racial continent of Africa at that time. Enslaved captive warriors were usually of another tribe and were therefore "foreigners" to their masters, just as slaves were generally foreigners within other ancient cultures. Enslavement for punishment and debt was also practiced; the employment of convicts and debtors in the fields, rather than their imprisonment or execution, seemed to be a natural preferment among the agrarian peoples of Africa. Although slavery in early Africa was no less cruel than slavery elsewhere, its cruelty was mitigated in some places by the granting of certain rights to slaves – to marry, to own property, and to be manumitted by a kindly master. When the European slavers arrived, it seemed perfectly proper for native rulers to barter their slaves for such goods as cloth, guns, and rum. They knew nothing of what happened to the slave after he left Africa.

Both the individual family unit and the extended family unit were to be found in Africa. The extended family, possibly a more prevalent social institution, was composed of several individual families related by kinship and common residence and united under a single head. Relationships within both types could be traced either through the male or female parent's line. In a society where public service agencies and institutions were lacking, widowed, orphaned, and impoverished individuals could and did obtain help more readily through the extended family system.

Polygyny, involving the marriage of one man to two or more wives, was prevalent geographically but limited in practice to rather well-to-do persons since it multiplied the customarily high costs of entering into matrimony. Elaborate rules and customs defined the position, rights, and responsibilities of each wife. When Christian missionaries attempted to discourage polygyny, more objection was raised by the women than the men, for wives had found considerable security and release from household drudgery under this system.

Religious practices prior to the period of European missionary activity were outwardly superstitious and a variety of fetishes and magic objects were known and used. However, the basic religious theme, ancestor worship, was hidden from the European observer; had he been an Asian, he would have found it a familiar one, capable of satisfying the human spirit and productive of a high order of human values. The spirituality of the dead relative and his ability to influence the living were universally accepted beliefs and they offered a measure of security and solace to those who observed them. They also strengthened family ties. In this family-oriented religion the priest was the family patriarch and the funeral rites of deceased relatives were particularly elaborate family ceremonials. While Islam was to acquire a considerable number of Negro converts before the fourteenth century, as did Christianity following the fifteenth century, neither religion achieved overwhelming success in converting African peoples south of the Sahara. Tribal worship was an important part of their way of life and the warfare and enslavement which they came to associate with Islam and Christianity made the basic doctrine of these faiths – that of brotherly love – more difficult to accept.

Music and its related art form, the dance, were important aspects of African culture and while both were used in religious observances, they were also employed for recreational and aesthetic purposes. Africans devised and used many different types of musical instruments and composed a large variety of songs and instrumental compositions. Musical forms were often quite complex with regard to scale, rhythm, and arrangement, and lullabies, work and dance songs, and sacred melodies were frequently heard. African music should not be confused with the use of the drum as a rhythmic accompaniment to the dance; the music was usually antiphonal and often quite moving.

There were several great stocks or families of languages spoken in Africa – nine according to one recent classification – and innumerable dialects and languages were spoken within each group. This undoubtedly constituted a barrier to the development of written forms, and it later compelled Negroes in the New World to master the European languages of the colonists in order to converse among themselves. Africa's linguistic diversity provides a rich field of investigation for the anthropologist; it offers important clues about the origins and movements of particular peoples as well as indications of how they came to regard the objects and activities of daily life that were known to them. Early African literature is predominantly oral and is known to us largely through its translation into written Arabic and various other languages after the fourteenth century; a considerable portion of it is still recounted in oral fashion among Africans today, much in the manner of American folklore. It consists of supernatural tales, morality stories, epic stories and poems, proverbs, satires, love stories, funeral pieces, and comic tales. Many of the stories resemble the Aesopian fables whose author, according to some accounts, was a captive Negro slave in Greece.

AFRICAN CULTURE IN THE NEW WORLD

There has been, and still is, public and scholarly controversy concerning the transmission and preservation of African culture in the New World and particularly in the United States. At the popular level, such controversy may be seen as part of the traditional concern about the national identity, but it has seldom been devoid of racist sentiment and it has not been a very fruitful debate. Scholars in the United States have not always been immune to emotionalism and bias, either, but it is significant that among them today the question is no longer *whether* African cultural traditions were brought here but, rather, to what extent *did* they contribute to the formation of new cultural patterns within a distinctively American culture. It should be noted that specialists in Latin American history generally are less reluctant than their colleagues working in United States history to identify and appraise the impact of African culture within their area of study. Although the African heritage may be more distinguishable south of the Rio Grande, there are fewer academic and social impediments to its study within the context of Latin American history and the subject is extensively treated in recently published general works in this area. Nevertheless, specialists in United States history are now filling in the gaps and are utilizing new scholarship in African, Latin American, and United States history for this purpose. As a result, an assessment of African cultural contributions made today need not be as tentative as it was formerly.

Despite recent progress, there is much research still to be done and many difficulties to be resolved. To begin with, the first Negroes in the New World were themselves representative of a wide variety of cultures; as a result of fusions among these cultures what was to emerge as an Africanism in one part of the hemisphere did not always resemble Africanisms elsewhere. In addition, African traditions merged with a wide variety of European and Indian cultural patterns. To further complicate the historian's task, indigenous African cultures were themselves undergoing change during the four centuries of the slave trade, thus adding to already formidable problems of causation. With regard to United States cultural history, a particular African custom or tradition might have to be traced back through many generations directly to Africa or through an intermediary Caribbean or Latin American culture to Africa.

No assessment of the transplanted African heritage can ignore the conditions under which the carriers of that heritage were compelled to live in the New World. By its very nature, the process of enslavement involved the deliberate obliteration of the slave's culture and the imposition of that of the master. The barbarous impact of slavery in the New World made it very difficult for the advanced cultural attributes of the first slaves to survive and those that did survive did so where the conditions of slavery were mildest. It is by no accident of history that African cultural traditions are today less distinctive in North America where the African encountered his worst oppressors, and most evident in Latin America where, as will be shown, slavery was comparatively mild and full citizenship less difficult to achieve.

Where, then, do African cultural traditions survive in the United States? Although they are difficult to detect after the passage of so many years, they still can be seen in the language, in such words as *banjo, yam, canoe* and *goober*. Scholars have found them in folklore, in tales that have come to us long after the days of slavery, in the dialect lore of Uncle Remus which Joel Chandler Harris set down after the Civil War, and in the writings of such American slaves as George Horton and Gustavus Vassa who could remember their African homes. Authors of religious histories have seen them in Negro adaptations of Christianity which sought to fulfill the need for freedom — the personal God, the creation of all mankind from one blood and clay, the imagery of Egyptian bondage, the Heavenly release from poverty and oppression. Students of American music and the dance speak frequently of African survivals; they see them in the spirituals, in the work songs of the plantation, logging camp, and railroad, in the "blues," in the dance rhythms of Latin America and American jazz. Possibly the most important characteristic of the African heritage was its ability to adapt itself to cultural patterns from which the newly-arrived Negro had been isolated. African culture had developed outside the scope of Western culture as it came to be known in the New World and the Negro's ability to share in the creation of a distinctively American civiization is itself testimony of his rich background. As Max Lerner has observed, "in the contact of European and African cultures in America something striking was bound to happen to the new amalgam. The quality of American music, dance, literature, theater, religion, today is evidence that it did."

Chapter 3

THE LATIN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

The Negro first came to the New World more than a century before twenty Negroes were left at Jamestown in 1619 by the captain of a Dutch frigate. During the sixteenth century, his first century here, he worked in the fields, plantations, and mines of the Caribbean islands and of the Spanish and Portugese lands south of the Rio Grande. His language and culture were Iberian, not English, and his new religion was that of the *conquistadores* rather than those of the colonists who later were to settle in the British colonies of North America.

The story of the Negro's first century in America, then, belongs properly to the history of Latin America and for this reason we turn now, not to the New World of John Smith and William Bradford to the north, but rather to the lands of Balboa, Pizarro, and Cortes to the south.

There are even more compelling reasons than chronology for a careful study of the Negro's Latin-American experience. Negro slavery in Latin America followed a course similar to, yet significantly different from, the institution that evolved within the thirteen English colonies and the nation that emerged from them. And because of this and other unique historical factors, the pattern of Negro life and culture today in the nations of the Caribbean and Central and South America is in many ways unlike its counterpart in the United States. An understanding of these aspects of Negro history may well help to make much of our own national past more comprehensible.

THE SLAVE TRADE

The commerce which brought thousands upon thousands of Africans to the New World and which was later to flow northward to the English colonies was, during its first century, securely fastened to the Spanish and Portugese possessions in America and we may therefore examine it here. The slave trade to the Americas formally opened in 1517 when Bishop Las Casas advocated the encouragement of immigation by permitting Spaniards to import twelve Negroes each; it is known to have existed in the Western Hemisphere in a less formal fashion prior to that year. Portugal was the first European country to take part in the African slave trade – the thousands of Negro slaves in Europe prior to the discovery of America had been carried there largely in Portugese-owned vessels. Once the slave trade to the New World had begun in earnest, Portugese merchants, acting privately, proved to be no match for the government-supported companies and merchants of other nations and Portugal's ultimate role in the trade became a minor one. Spaniards were unable to carry on the trade themselves since they had been denied access to Africa by the Papal arbitration of 1493, but the *Asiento*, the legal privilege of shipping slaves to the Spanish colonies, was available for purchase and it was sold by Spain to several companies and individuals of other countries. From the sixteenth through the early part of the nineteeth centuries, the slave trade was monopolized by the Dutch, the French, and especially by the English.

The actual acquisition of slaves along the West African coast was an elaborate and complex process. Permanent trading posts had to be established, complicated bargaining sessions and exchanges between post officials and native chiefs had to be arranged, war captives and kidnapped natives had to be brought from the interior, and ships frequently had to make several stops along the coast in order to acquire full cargoes – both human and material – for the voyage west.

The "Middle Passage," as the voyage to the Caribbean came to be called, was replete with every form of human misery. Accounts of slave deaths due to overcrowding, disease, suicides, beatings, and malnutrition are already well known and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the slave trade reached its height in the 1790's and that a conservative estimate is that over 14,000,000 Negro slaves were imported by the time of its cessation in the 19th century. The total number of slaves removed from Africa must have been far greater. The effects of this profitable business on the mercantile economies of the trading nations and on the subsequent history of a depopulated African continent are not difficut to see.

SLAVERY IN LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY

Recent historical scholarship reveals that the first Negroes in the New World served as explorers as well as slaves. Records indicate that Negroes participated in the exploratory expeditions of Balboa, the discoverer of the Pacific, and Cortes, the conquerer of Mexico. Alvarado and Pizarro in South America and Coronado and Cabeza de Vaca in the northern continent also were accompanied by Negroes. Estevanico, a

Negro explorer, helped to open up New Mexico and Arizona and prepared the way for further conquest of the Southwest by his Spanish countrymen. Negroes are known to have accompanied French Jesuit missionaries on their early travels through North America.

Free Negroes lived in Spain and Portugal prior to the discovery of the New World and some were among the earliest waves of immigrants to Latin America. The vast majority of Negroes, nevertheless, came to the Caribbean and mainland possessions of Spain and Portugal as slaves. In 1501, when Spain officially permitted Negroes to come to her new lands, Negro slaves and servants had already been employed in Europe for more than half a century, principally on the Iberian peninsula. But it was recognized that slavery in Europe could never be profitable, especially at a time when large numbers of European farm workers were themselves becoming landless and were seeking employment. Only in the New World with its vast natural resources, its shortage of labor, and its undeveloped regions would the slavery of Negroes be profitable.

The failure of the first colonizers to enslave the Indian inhabitants of their new possessions underscored the desirability of Negro servitude. Indian slaves employed in the mines of Haiti and the fields of the Caribbean islands died in large numbers, if not from the oppressive labor, then from the diseases to which they lacked resistance. Moveover, Indians found it difficult to adjust to the complex agricultural economy and cultural milieu of their masters. That the Negro was better able to do so is indicative, not of the lack of courage to resist his captivity —his resistance was universally known and feared—but of his own cultural experiences and abilities to absorb those of others. The relatively shorter life span of the Negro slave as compared with that of his master, revealed by studies of birth and death records remaining from the period of servitude, seems to contradict the myth of the Negro's special adaptability to the climactic conditions of the tropical lowlands and the rain forests. The use of white indentured servants was more prevalent in the English colonies of the seventeenth century than the Spanish possessions of the sixteenth and Negro slavery and the African slave trade shortly became fixed institutions of Iberian America; slaves, first "seasoned" in the Caribbean islands, were rapidly introduced into the mainland possessions.

That slavery in Latin America could, on occasion, be as cruel as slavery elsewhere is borne out by numerous instances of uprisings and large-scale insurrections. In the 1550's, for example, several outbreaks in Colombia necessitated strenuous counter-measures on the part of the authorities. Local "black codes"—rules and regulations governing the conduct and treatment of slaves—frequently became more proscriptive as a result of these revolts. Even in Brazil, where the Negro slave probably experienced his greatest measure of well-being, major insurrections took place in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro during the seventeenth century. In fact, a flourishing Negro state, the Republic of Palmares, was established around 1630 by fugitive slaves in northeastern Brazil and, despite a series of hostilities, it managed to survive until its final destruction in 1696. Several eminent historians of Latin America have described Palmares' complex political structure. Hubert Herring, for example, notes "the high degree of social and economic co-operation" that developed within the state, while Arthur Ramos calls Palmares "a monument to the innate ability of the Brazilian Negro to create for himself without outside aid or encouragement the essential implements of a social order."

Specialists in Latin American history and culture, as well as persons who have traveled extensively in Latin America during the past few decades, invariably report that the Negro's social status within the nations south of the Rio Grande is significantly higher than that prevailing within the United States. Although interracial problems are not unknown in Latin America, particularly with regard to Indian, Asian, and even Negro minority groups in various places throughout the continent, they seem to be less intense in the Ibero-European cultures of Latin America than in the United States and North America generally. This may in part be attributed to the relative mildness of the slaves' lot in colonial Latin America as compared with his treatment in English America. For although severity and cruelty existed, and insurrections, as has been seen, were commonplace enough, several factors reduced the harshness of the institution.

One of these was the Catholic Church. We have seen how the institution of slavery within the Roman Empire was rendered less inhuman as the influence of the Church increased and how manumission, the sanctity of the slave's family, and the recognition that even the slave had a soul became important aspects of early Christian theology. It should be remembered also that, during the Middle Ages and thereafter, slavery was frequently condoned on the grounds that it Christianized pagans. Prior to the settlement of America, Portugal and Spain applied these doctrines to the Moslem, Negro, and Jewish slaves then held in captivity and they were supported by the Church in the New World. Religious and secular instruction given by the various religious orders did much to reduce illiteracy and to acculturize the Negro slave to the ways of his European masters, while the Church's advocacy of manumission early produced a relatively large number of free Negroes. Nor did the Church generally frown upon interracial marriages. The reluctance of Spanish and Portuguese women to emigrate to America may in part be responsible for the numerous alliances which occurred between Iberian colonizers and the Indian and Negro women, and the Latin American of today is more often than not the product of biological as well as cultural fusion. Frank Tannenbaum, the noted American historian, points out that the Negro in Latin America achieved social status before he acquired legal status, whereas the reverse seems to be true in the United States.

Other factors also played a part in shaping the Negro's position within Latin American society. Slavery during the colonial period was dispersed throughout the area of Spanish and Portuguese control and was not confined to a relatively small area along the coast as in English America. John Hope Franklin says of this: "There was more *lebensraum* in which both the master and the slave could assert themselves. . . . The slaves presented no serious problem in sheer numbers, and, therefore, the fear of insurrection, though it existed, was not so great as to tax the ingenuity of the Spaniards to become inhumanly severe." Eric Williams, on the other hand, believes that slavery in Latin America was less harsh than slavery to the north since it was less profitable.

Finally, numerous historians have pointed out that there was generally a greater respect for the Negro as a human being in Latin America than in English America. This view is persuasively expressed by Hubert Herring:

> In the countries of Latin America the institution of slavery was certainly as cruel as it was in the United States, but perhaps with this subtle difference: while the Spaniard or the Portuguese was cruel to the *slave*, the North American was cruel to the *Negro*. And this may account in part for the somewhat more ready acceptance of the free Negro into the society of Spanish and Portuguese America.

EMANCIPATION

The United States was neither the first nor the last country of the New World to abolish slavery when it did so in 1865. The first national legislature to enact emancipation was that of revolutionary France, which in 1794 proclaimed universal freedom for everyone living under the French flag. This proclamation legally~~—if no~~t actually freed all the slaves in the French West Indies.

Haiti was the first of the New World countries to abolish slavery. The ten years of warfare that saw the rise and fall of Toussaint L'Ouverture and the ultimate defeat of Napoleon's Haitian armies by Dessalines, Christophe, and Clervaux culminated in independence and the final abolishment of slavery by 1804. The ending of slavery within England in 1772 and the termination of the British slave trade in 1807 led ultimately to the passage of the famous Act of 1833 which abolished slavery in all the British overseas possessions, including Canada, mainland colonies in Central and South America, and island colonies in the Caribbean. Under this act, slave owners were to be given compensation for the loss of their property and an apprenticeship system was to prepare the ex-slaves for full freedom. It soon became apparent that apprenticeship meant curtailed liberty and by 1838 the system had disappeared from most of the British colonies in the Western Hemisphere.

On the Spanish and Portugese mainland, the emancipation of the slaves was related to the struggle for independence. The participation of Negroes in the wars for independence, the slave uprisings against the loyalist planter class, and the traditional legal antipathy toward slavery helped to increase sentiment among the revolutionary leaders for emancipation; slavery was abolished in the United Provinces of Central America in 1824, in Mexico in 1829, and, with the exception of Cuba and Brazil, in Latin America generally by 1855. Cuban slaves achieved their freedom in 1886 and the last group of Brazilian slaves, numbering approximately 700,000, was finally emancipated in 1888.

With emancipation, the vast majority of Negroes, particularly in the Caribbean, were to find themselves in a position akin to that of the sharecropper and tenant farmer in the United States after the Civil War. Negroes have since made few contributions to the cultural and intellectual life of the British West Indies, largely because the majority of talented and trained Negroes leave the islands and live either in Europe or in the United States. In some areas of the Latin American mainland, Negroes are no longer a distinct ethnic group, having fused racially and culturally with Indians and whites. Where Negroes do exist in large numbers as such, the great majority are impoverished; poverty, however, characterizes the vast majority of Latin Americans today and it is due to economic rather than racial factors. In Brazil, the Negro population is sufficiently large to maintain a fully developed ethnic awareness and a community of cultural and social interests that may be described as Negro and it is in Brazil that Negro cultural achievements have developed most fully. At the same time, Brazilian Negroes have been completely integrated into the political and cultural life of the nation.

The culture of Latin America today has in numerous ways felt the hand of the African slave and his emancipated descendants. Negroes have helped to shape the political life, the religious and economic institutions, music, the dance, fine arts, and the social customs of the nations to which they were brought forcibly as slaves. The literature and folklore of Latin America bear the imprint of Negro themes and its history the record of Negro statesmen and soldiers who took part in the universal struggle for human freedom.

Chapter 4

SERVANTS, SLAVES, AND PATRIOTS: 1619-1790

There are two major elements in American Negro history prior to the end of the Civil War. One, of course, is the story of the Negro himself – a story that has largely been neglected by the historian of the American past. It is the story not only of years of toil and degradation, but of widespread resistance to and rejection of servitude. It tells of the Negro's impact upon the life and culture of the wider community, a community which, by and large, had respect for his labor but hostility for his person and spirit. In one sense, it is a tale of acculturation, of adapting to the ways of a new civilization while helping to create it, of participating in a complex social process which affected every immigrant in the New World. It is the story of enslaved Negroes in a free society, of free Negroes in an unfree world, and of their striving for a share of the great American dream. These are basic themes in Negro history and they are as much a part of the American story as well.

The second major element in Negro history before 1865 has often obscured the first, but it is there nevertheless. It is the story of slavery. All of the textbooks in United States history tell it and many tell it well. Briefly, it begins with the arrival of the Negro during the second decade of the seventeenth century. Almost all Negroes and many Europeans were involuntarily brought here to augment the inadequate supply of labor in the colonies. Negro servitude, unlike that of the European, came to be associated with the institution of chattel slavery. Although widely dispersed, the Negro population of the colonies gradually concentrated in those areas of the South where larger farms or plantations existed and where such "cash" crops as tobacco, rice, and indigo were grown. The number of Negroes in the colonies increased slowly during the seventeenth century but rose sharply during the eighteenth, partly due to the successful efforts of slave traders in New England and Old, but largely as the result of the increased demand for inexpensive labor brought about by agricultural expansion. During and following the American Revolution, democratic sentiment and economic considerations combined to produce considerable antipathy toward slavery and gradual emancipation occurred in most of the Northern states. The invention of the cotton gin in 1793, the rapid growth of the textile industry in New England and Great Britain, and the expansion of cotton cultivation throughout the states of the South and Southwest fixed Negro slavery upon the economy of a rapidly developing nation. By 1830, the institution of slavery was sufficiently entrenched to be considered generally as part of the Southern, if not the American, way of life. During the thirty years that followed, it became enmeshed in a broader sectional conflict that was to end in national catastrophe but also in renewed hope for the American dream of freedom.

From Servant to Slave

Although the history of the Negro in English America properly begins in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619, the history of slavery does not. The first Negroes to arrive in the thirteen colonies were neither designated nor thought of as "slaves" in the sense that word was to assume throughout much of our later history. They may best be described as bound servants, the only distinction separating them from the larger number of unfree white workers during these early years being that of color. The shortage of labor in the colonies was an acute problem from the very beginning and, during the seventeenth century, it was met largely by a system of indentures. Under this plan, workers were contracted to serve a master for a designated period of years, after which they were to be released from any further obligation of bondage. Accordingly, some of the first Negroes to arrive in Virginia were assigned land upon the expiration of their term of service, while others enjoyed whatever liberties and rights were then available to those of the free laboring class.

How, then, was indentured service transformed into chattel slavery? Slavery in the colonies seems to have emerged from traditional English institutions adjusted to American conditions. As was seen earlier, servitude in Europe throughout the Middle Ages and thereafter took the form of serfdom, an inherited condition under which the peasant, limited in the right to own property or enter into contracts, could be bought and sold with the land he worked. While serfdom was declining in England by the time the American colonies were established, it and other involuntary forms of bondage – including those for debt, crime, and illegitimacy of birth – were known and practiced. Servitude could also be entered voluntarily, usually for a fixed period of years, occasionally for life, and often without definite statement of term. Persons unable to pay for their passage to America could thus barter their labor for transportation. In England and in English America, indentured servants could be sold for profit, given in payment for debt, and otherwise transferred like movable goods or chattel. Expiration of a term of service often had little meaning. For many servants, it marked the end of one period of servitude and the beginning of another. Masters had extensive disciplinary powers and these were enforced by physical chastisement or by extension of the term of service. Servants were whipped rather than fined since they had no property.

The word "slavery" was used at times but it had no meaning in English and early colonial law. It was a popular term of derogation used to describe lower forms of labor and in the colonies before 1660 it was applied to Indians, Negroes, Irishmen, and Englishmen alike.

Beginning in the 1640's, Negroes ceased to be servants and became slaves. Within a few decades they were to be thought of as commodities, as objects rather than men, the chattel property of their masters. The strangeness of their African languages and customs caused European colonists to become aware of the differences between themselves and the Africans and this contributed to the transformation; but more practical considerations also entered into it. White indentures, generally preferred by the planters, were short in supply and had to be replaced by others after their terms had ended. In order to encourage more white servants to come to the colonies, legislation was adopted to improve their working conditions and it became easier for them to enter the life of a freeman and landowner. The Negroes' coming was involuntary, however, and improved working conditions for them would not affect the flow of African workers into the colonies. If anything, perpetual service seemed more economical to the planters and it was increasingly practiced after 1640. There were further advantages in perpetual Negro servitude; Negro runaways could be detected easily because of their color and could be punished severely because they were not Christians. Escape through baptism ended with the passage of laws declaring that conversion alone did not end servitude. Color thus became the token of slave status and, to complete the Negro's separation from the European, local traditions and stringent slave codes were adopted which, in effect, detracted from his qualities as a human being and established his inferiority in the eyes of the white community.

THE SLAVE TRADE DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

During the eighteenth century, Negro slavery and the slave trade became prominent institutions of American life. While slavery flourished in the Southern colonies, large numbers of slaves were held in the Middle and New England colonies as well. Although the employment of Negroes became more characteristic of southern rather than northern agriculture, the slave trade in the Middle and New England colonies more than compensated for the relative decline in the profitable use of slave labor. Throughout the century, New England traders were active in the slave trade and Newport, Rhode Island, became a principal port of entry. The voyage from New England to the West Indies for rum, then the crossing to West Africa where rum was exchanged for slaves, ended with the infamous "Middle Passage" back to the New World again and it became one of the major patterns of the "Triangular Trade." In fact, when southern colonial legislatures, reflecting the planters' fears of miscegination and slave insurrections, laid duties on imported slaves, slave traders in both New England and the mother country induced the British government to prohibit such taxes. Royal instructions in 1731 forbade governors to consent to such legislation; and when South Carolina prohibited the slave trade entirely in 1760, the act was disallowed by the King in Council.

Due largely to these commercial interests, slave importations mounted sharply after 1690. Virginia had 12,000 Negroes by 1708 when it was importing approximately 1,000 Negroes annually. There were 23,000 Negroes in Virginia by 1715, 42,000 by 1743, 120,000 by 1756, and 260,000 by 1782. Slave importations throughout the colonies increased from an annual average of 2,500 during the years between 1715 and 1750 to 7,500 on the eve of the American Revolution.

Plots and Insurrections in Colonial Times

Even during the colonial period the Negro did not submit passively to his status. The emergence of perpetual slavery, accompanied by the the enactment and enforcement of stringent slave codes, increased the incidence of rebelliousness, and rebelliousness, in turn, brought even harsher legal reprisals against the Negro. Between 1663 and 1687, several "conspiracies" and plots were uncovered among the slaves of Virginia. In 1687, a plot was revealed in the Northern Neck in which the slaves, during a mass funeral, had planned to kill all the whites in the vicinity in a desperate bid for freedom. In 1720, several slaves were burned alive and still others banished because of implication in a revolt near Charleston, South Carolina. Another serious outbreak occurred ten years later in the same area. In 1739, three Negro uprisings broke out in South Carolina. The most serious of these was the so-called Cato Conspiracy which occurred at Stono, about twenty miles west of Charleston. Here the slaves killed two guards in a warehouse, secured arms and ammunition, and proceeded to escape toward Florida, then a Spanish territory and already a haven for runaways. After several encounters with their pursuers, all but ten slaves were captured or killed. About thirty whites and forty-four Negroes lost their lives.

The uncovering of still another plot in Charleston in 1740 resulted in the hanging of fifty Negroes.

Such events were not confined to the southern colonies. Slaves had always been in high demand in New Netherland and were employed on the farms in the Hudson River Valley. Both slavery and the slave trade became increasingly important after the English seized the colony in 1664. In 1723, the census listed 6,171 slaves in the colony of New York and by 1771, the Negro population had increased to 19,883 in a total population of 168,007. Here, too, a harsh slave code caused considerable trouble. Minor incidents in New York City in 1696 and 1708 were followed by a fully organized insurrection in the spring of 1712 when twenty-three armed slaves met in an orchard near the center of the town. At the appointed time, a building was burned, and in the rioting that followed several whites were shot. The militia was called out to find the Negroes who had gone into hiding and sentries were posted to prevent any escape from Manhattan. When the Negroes were captured, six committed suicide. Twenty-one were executed; some, including a woman, were hanged; some were burned; one was suspended in chains alive without food or drink until he was dead; one was broken on the wheel, his head and quarters being placed at the Queen's disposal.

Hysteria resulting from the fear of a slave revolt plunged the city of New York into a veritable orgy of Negro persecutions in 1741 and the worst outbreak of violence that was to occur anywhere during the colonial period swiftly followed. Beginning with a burglary, a series of fires broke out and a wave of panic seized the city as rumors spread that Negroes and poor whites had conspired to seize control. Despite insufficient evidence, 154 Negroes and 25 whites were prosecuted. Of the 101 Negroes convicted, eighteen were hanged, thirteen burned alive, and seventy banished. Four white people, two of whom were women, were also hanged. Executions were scheduled at the rate of two per week, and they kept the citizens in a prolonged state of great excitement until sheer exhaustion set in. An increasing supply of white labor ultimately reduced both the necessity and fear of Negroes and, by the time of the Revolution, New Yorkers had begun to recognize the moral and economic undesirability of slavery.

THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA

The year 1763, which marked the end of the French and Indian War, is a turning point in American colonial history. To meet the high costs of that conflict as well as the administration of the colonies, the British instituted a new, and in the eyes of the colonists, a harsher colonial policy. The result was increased colonial concern for economic and political rights which ultimately brought separation from and war against the mother country. The year 1763 is also a turning point in Negro history since it inaugurated an era during which antislavery sentiment was for the first time widely expressed. There was a relationship between these developments, one which many of the colonists themselves perceived, for they could hardly assert that their own rights were being violated when as slaveholders they were denying similar rights to others. As will be seen, the problem of slavery was to be linked to the fight against England, and the mother country and its policies were to be held responsible for the fastening of slavery upon colonial life.

There was, to be sure, some antislavery sentiment prior to the Revolutionary era but it was not widespread. It may be traced back to 1688 when Francis Pastorius and the German Friends at Germantown, Pennsylvania declared that slavery was contrary to Christian principles. It appeared again when the Yearly Meeting in 1696 warned members against importing slaves and in 1755 when it ruled that all Friends who should thereafter import slaves would be excluded from the denomination. John Woolman, the New Jersey Quaker, Anthony Benezet, the Philadelphia Huguenot, Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush, the famed physician, were all participating in antislavery activities during the period of the French and Indian War.

The spread of revolutionary ideas after 1763, particularly those related to "natural rights" philosophy, made antislavery a public issue. In his *Rights of the British Colonies*, published in 1764, James Otis included an eloquent statement of the Negro's inalienable right to freedom. The martyrdom of Crispus Attucks, a runaway slave, in the Boston Massacre of 1770 symbolizes the connection between British policy and slavery. As a forty-seven year old seaman with over twenty years of experience on the merchant ships plying out of Boston harbor, Attucks knew well the restrictions which England's new navigation acts imposed. His death, the first in the struggle against England, seemed to underscore the connection between mercantilist policies and Negro slavery.

As revolutionary fervor mounted, the antislavery movement gained even further support. In 1773, the Reverend Isaac Skillman went so far as to assert that in conformity with natural law, slaves should rebel against their masters. The next year, Thomas Jefferson, in *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, described abolition as the great object of desire in the colonies and accused Britain of consistently blocking all efforts to end the slave trade. In the fall of 1774, the Continental Congress passed an agreement not to import any slaves after December 1, 1775. In 1775, the first antislavery society was organized by the Quakers. And in 1776, in a draft of the Declaration of Independence submitted to Congress, Jefferson included, in John Adams' words, a "vehement phillipic against Negro slavery." His charges against the king were harsh and uncompromising:

> He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of *infidel* powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce; and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting these very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which *he* deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom *he* also obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes committed against the *liberties* of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the *lives* of another.

These charges were not accepted by the Congress, however, and they were stricken from the final text of the Declaration. Some Congressmen doubtless were aware that they failed to consider the activities of colonial merchants in the slave trade. Others who favored slavery realized that the inclusion of these charges would end any justification for the institution once the ties with England were completely cut. The elimination of the antislavery passage has been regarded by some observers as an affirmation of the colonial view that independence, freedom, and equality did not apply to those of African descent.

During and following the Revolutionary War antislavery and manumission activities continued. Several state legislatures abolished the slave trade and manumission acts were enacted in Pennsylvania in 1780, in Connecticut and Rhode Island in 1784, in New York in 1785, and in New Jersey in 1786. By a judicial decision in 1783, the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, which held that "all men are born free and equal," was construed as having abolished slavery. And in 1787, slavery was abolished in the Northwest Territory by the famous Ordinance of that year.

NEGROES AND THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

Throughout the colonial period, Negroes, free and slave, were excluded from militia service since it was feared that military training would inevitably lead to slave insurrections. Despite such restrictions, Negroes are known to have participated in the French and Indian War and, like the white colonists, they gained considerable experience from this conflict in the way of preparation for that to come.

In May, 1775, one month after the battles of Lexington and Concord, the Massachusetts Committee on Safety decided that only freemen should be used in future hostilities since the employment of slaves would be "inconsistent with the principles that are to be supported." Nevertheless, slaves and free Negroes participated in many of the battles of the war. Slaves were frequently manumitted to serve in the army and they were integrated into white companies. Many Negro soldiers performed services for which they were officially commended. Among these were Peter Salem, a hero of the Battle of Bunker Hill who won the admiration of his comrades for shooting the British Major Pitcairn, and Salem Poor, who was praised as "a brave and gallant soldier" in that battle in an official commendation presented to the Massachusetts legislature.

Despite the Negroes' records in these early battles, an over-all policy of excluding all Negroes from enlistment was adopted by George Washington and his aides once their command of the Continental army was established in July, 1775. This policy was modified, however, after the British offered freedom to all Negroes who joined His Majesty's forces. In January, 1776, Congress approved Washington's plan to permit free Negroes to enlist and to continue the exclusion of slaves. Meanwhile, as a result of British policy, hundreds of slaves were induced to join the British army while other thousands simply ran away; still others were carried away by British troops who used their labor in constructing fortifications and in performing other non-combat services. Another reaction to British policy was the liberalization of Negro enlistment in the several state militias. Before the war had ended, most state legislatures and even the Continental Congress were enlisting slaves and promising them freedom at the end of their service. Of the 300,000 soldiers who served in the war, approximately 5,000 were Negroes. The majority of these were from the North and they served in every phase of the war and under every possible condition. Some were volunteers; some were drafted while still others were substitutes for white draftees. Several separate Negro fighting groups were formed and at least one of these was commanded by a Negro officer. The vast majority of

Negroes serving in the army and navy generally did so in integrated units and were highly regarded by friend and foe alike.

TOWARD SPIRITUAL FREEDOM: EARLY CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

Other Negroes besides Peter Salem and Salem Poor made distinctive contributions during the colonial and Revolutionary periods and in areas other than the military. The first widely read Negro writer in America, Jupiter Hammon, was a slave on Long Island. Strongly influenced by the Wesleyan revival that had occurred in England and America during his youth as well as the writings of Charles Wesley and William Cowper, Hammon published "An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ, with Penetential Cries" in 1761. A twenty-one stanza poem, "To Miss Phillis Wheatley," was published in 1778 and other writings of his appeared in print during the next two decades. His most remarkable work, "An Address to the Negroes of New York," was published in 1787. In it, he indicated a personal contentment with his lot. "For my own part," he wrote, "I do not wish to be free; for many of us who are grown up slaves, and have always had masters to take care of us, should hardly know how to take care of themselves and it may be for our own comfort to remain as we are." Sensing some of the difficulties that were to confront many newly emancipated Negroes seventy-eight years later, Hammon, nevertheless, believed that slavery was an evil system and urged the manumission of young Negroes. One year before his death, the State of New York enacted legislation providing for the gradual emancipation of slaves — the earlier act of 1785 permitted manumission by the master and self-purchase by the slave — and Hammon, who had failed to raise sufficient funds to purchase his own freedom, could rejoice in the eventual freedom of others.

Gustavus Vassa's reputation rests upon an autobiography which was frequently printed and read in England and America and which provides us with the fullest account we have of an eighteenth century Negro. Born in Benin in 1745, he was kidnapped by slavers when he was eleven years old, taken to America and placed in service on a Virginia plantation. He subsequently had the good fortune to become the property of a Philadelphia merchant who took him on voyages to the West Indies and helped him to purchase his freedom. He ultimately made his home in England, became active in the British antislavery movement and in 1790 presented to Parliament a petition to abolish the slave trade. His two-volume autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oloudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa,* was first published in 1789; it was an immediate success and within five years eight editions had been issued. Vassa's resentment of slavery was pronounced and he condemned Christians for their acceptance of the institution. "O, ye nominal Christians!" he wrote, "Might not an African ask you — Learned you this from your God, who says unto you, Do unto all men as you would men should do unto you? Is it not enough that we are torn from our country and friends, to toil for your luxury and lust of gain? Must every tender feeling be likewise sacrificed to your avarice?"

Phillis Wheatley, regarded by many as the most gifted Negro literary figure in colonial America, was born in Africa about 1753 and was brought to Boston when still a little girl. She received kindly treatment and an opportunity to cultivate her mind and rapidly learned to read the Bible as well as books on history, astronomy, geography, and the Latin classics. Her first poem, "On the Death of Reverend George Whitefield," appeared in 1770. In 1773, she was manumitted and sent to England for her health. Her first book, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral,* was published shortly thereafter. After her return to America she composed "His Excellency George Washington" (for which the general commended her), "Liberty and Peace," and many other poems. A lyric poet, Phillis Wheatley did not concern herself with Negro themes; in this respect her work anticipated that of later Negro writers who searched for independence through the method of escape. Her fame continued long after her death in 1784 and she became one of the best known poets of New England.

Benjamin Banneker, a freeborn Negro, may well have been the most accomplished and versatile person of his race during the Revolutionary and early Federal periods. Born in 1731 in Maryland, he attended a private school open to whites and Negroes near Baltimore and developed a great interest in science and mathematics. Aided by George Ellicott, a Quaker, Banneker soon became sufficiently proficient in astronomy and mathematics to predict a solar eclipse and to begin in 1791 the publication of a series of almanacs, a task which he continued until 1802. James McHenry, later Secretary of War in the cabinet of John Adams, introduced him to a number of prominent officials in the national government. Upon receipt of a copy of the first almanac, Thomas Jefferson wrote to Banneker that he considered it "a document to which your whole race had a right for its justifications against the doubts which had been entertained of them"— doubts which Jefferson himself had had — and the first Secretary of State promptly sent the almanac to Condorcet, then secretary of the Academy of Sciences in Paris. Banneker's most distinguished honor was his appointment to serve with the commission to define the boundaries and lay out the streets of the District of Columbia. Nominated for this post by Jefferson and appointed by President Washington, Banneker worked with Major Pierre L'Enfant and gained fame as a surveyor as well as an astronomer. The outbreak of war in Europe in 1793 and its threat to the new American republic caused Banneker to devote considerable attention in his almanacs to the establishment of international peace. Noting that a Secretary of War sat in the cabinet, Banneker urged the appointment of a Secretary of Peace who, among his other duties, would control all the schools in the United States and through a program of education foster the ideals of peace. He also proposed that all military drills, uniforms, and titles be eliminated and that each family be given a Bible at public expense. Concerned as he was for the welfare of the American people, Banneker's sentiments regarding war and peace indicate his sensitivity to an enduring problem of mankind.

There were, of course, other prominent Negroes during these early years of our history. There was Onesimus, a slave owned by Cotton Mather, who encouraged inoculation for smallpox by describing its successful use in Africa. There was Lucy Terry of Deerfield, Massachusetts, a slave whose poetry was published as early as 1746. John Derham, the first Negro physician in America, was a slave assistant to a succession of physician-owners. His last master, a New Orleans doctor, offered him his freedom on liberal terms and helped him set up a practice of his own. And there was Paul Cuffe, a Massachusetts merchant, who by 1806 had acquired substantial property in ships, houses, and land and who later became interested in various colonization projects for manumitted Negroes. Their individual achievements, as well as those of Jupiter Hammon, Phillis Wheatley, Gustavus Vassa, and Benjamin Banneker, illustrate ways in which Negroes tried to secure a measure of spiritual independence and move toward intellectual and economic self-sufficiency. They had to overcome the degraded position of their race. Equally important, some were fortunate enough to live where the help of others was available, where slave customs were mild and where the climate of public opinion was less restrained by distinctions of color. Here is a pattern that is duplicated throughout much of American history prior to 1865.

The Constitution and Slavery

We have already seen how antislavery sentiment and manumission activities increased during the Revolutionary period and the four years following victory in 1783. Despite the efforts of some of the Founding Fathers to end slavery during the so-called Critical Period, the more conservative among them, fearing social disorder, political instability, and economic chaos, began to exercise greater power in political affairs. When the delegates to the Constitutional Convention assembled in Philadelphia in 1787, there were few antislavery spokesmen among them. Indeed, the Constitution that was finally adopted is credited by some historians with effectively checking the first phase of the antislavery movement. Although the word "slavery" does not appear in the original Constitution, the interests of those who owned slaves were carefully safeguarded by the extension of the slave trade for twenty years and by the provision for the return of runaway slaves who escaped to other states. The three-fifths compromise, by which five slaves were to be counted as three persons for purposes of taxation and representation, was perhaps satisfactory to no one but its adoption clearly indicates the strength of the proslavery interests at the Convention.

The Constitution, marking the end of an era of promise for the Negro, insured his continued enslavement. As John Hope Franklin has observed, "America's freedom was the means of giving slavery itself a longer life than it was to have in the British Empire."

Chapter 5

THE HOUSE DIVIDES: 1790-1861

Major historical developments that contributed to the nation's growth and prosperity from 1790 to 1861 may well have done so at considerable cost to the slave. The Constitution which established an effective federal system and safeguarded property rights left slavery to the care of the states and affirmed the property rights of slaveholders. The cotton gin, a device designed to save labor, placed an added premium on slave labor. The prosperity of the textile manufacturer and his workers, the planter and his creditors, and the shipowner and his crews came to depend in large measure upon the continued enslavement of the Negro. The Westward Movement peopled a vast continent and adapted the European heritage to the American frontier but it also carried cotton cultivation and slavery westward and made the extension of slavery into the territories a major political issue. The phenomenal population growth which Americans properly regarded as evidence of their nation's abundant resources and opportunities also included a substantial increase in the slave population; from 1790 to 1860 the number of slaves grew from nearly 700,000 to 4,000,000.

Even the growth of democratic institutions – the extension of the suffrage, the development of political parties, the movement toward free public education, the increasing concern for the rights of women, the sick, the insane, and the criminal – brought the slave's lot into sharper relief and widened the gulf between whites and Negroes. While the humanitarian impulse in American life was ultimately to come to grips with the issue of slavery and cause more people to recognize that evil and morally indefensible institution for what it was, it intensified the slaveholder's convictions that his "peculiar institution" was essential to his well-being and that he should resort to violent measures if these were necessary to repress slave rebelliousness. The slave remained enslaved even after the "irrepressible conflict" was transformed into actual war and, when the Emancipation Proclamation finally was signed, slaves in states which had not seceded continued to be slaves. "We are truly to be pitied," Thomas Jefferson wrote after the disastrous slave revolt of 1801 and his words could have been spoken by any American, Negro or white, before the Civil War.

THE COTTON KINGDOM EMERGES

Historians use the term "Cotton Kingdom" to describe the area of cotton cultivation that stretched a thousand miles from South Carolina to Texas before the Civil War. From south to north the region extended some 200 miles in Carolina to over 600 miles in the Mississippi Valley. This was originally a heavily wooded area and its numerous rivers provided easy transportation for bulky crops. It was also an area with a lengthy growing season which permitted two or even three vegetable crops a year and which was particularly suited to the growth of short-staple cotton. The pattern of its population growth parallels the admission of the southern tier of states into the Union: Louisiana in 1812, Mississippi in 1817, Alabama in 1819, and Texas in 1845. By the late 1850's the cotton economy and its labor system had achieved their maximum growth.

The origins of the Cotton Kingdom lie partly in the Westward Movement. The purchase of Louisiana in 1803 provided new opportunities for southern planters to acquire fertile land in exchange for the exhausted soils of the South Atlantic states, and the doctrine of Manifest Destiny – the pre-ordained expansion of the United States across the continent – united almost all the Southerners seeking to enlarge their "kingdom" with the many Northerners who saw the West as a great "empire for liberty."

Manifest Destiny and the Cotton Kingdom, both born before the beginning of the War of 1812, drew nourishment from that conflict. While the impressment of American sailors and the violation of neutral rights contributed heavily to the pre-war controversy, the acquisition of new lands and the westward expansion of slavery were early perceived as possible outcomes of the struggle. It is one of the ironies of history that the many Negroes who were to serve with distinction in the War of 1812 – with Captain Oliver H. Perry on the Great Lakes and particularly with General Andrew Jackson in New Orleans – were in a sense participating in the extension of the system that enslaved them. For, while both free Negroes and runaways were to move into the North Central States, by 1830 approximately 600,000 of the 2,000,000 slaves in the United States were to be found in the newer slaveholding areas of the Southwest. When the last census was taken before the Civil War, the newer states of the Cotton Kingdom, with 1,998,000 slaves, had taken the lead from the older ones in slave ownership. While Virginia was still ahead in numbers of slaves in a single state, Alabama and Mississippi were rapidly gaining ground.

The Slave Trade Continues

The movement westward into the Cotton Kingdom brought with it an increasing demand for slave labor, and the rising value of slave property made slave trading and slave breeding important domestic industries. With the official closing of the African trade in 1808 the domestic trade became more profitable, and more and more slaves were being advertised, auctioned, and carried into interstate commerce. Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Norfolk, and Charleston were the principal centers of the trade in the older states while Montgomery, Memphis, and New Orleans became important markets in the newer areas. Washington was the most notorious slave market until 1850 when the Compromise of that year brought an end to the industry in the nation's capital.

The systematic breeding of slaves appears to have been widely practiced and openly admitted by a number of prominent slaveholders. Virginia was known throughout the South, if not the nation, as a "Negro raising state." Thomas R. Dew reported in 1832 that Virginia exported 6,000 slaves per year as a result of breeding. Breeding practitioners were generally more highly regarded in the community than slave traders; their enterprise seemed to offer the economically depressed older states of the South a more acceptable way out of their decline.

Closely connected to slave trading and slave breeding was the practice of hiring slave labor. Some planters and farmers found it more economical to hire rather than own slaves, particularly when the conditions of their agriculture did not require a permanent slave force or when hands were short during the harvest season. Slaves were hired by the day, month, or year, and Hiring Day, often January 1, became a customary observance of the New Year season in many areas.

Although the importation of slaves was prohibited after 1807 by federal legislation, such laws were weak and they were seldom enforced effectively. American shipowners conducted an extensive trade between Africa and the United States during the years that followed the official closing of the trade. Despite pressures of international diplomacy and world opinion, and even despite the appeals of such Presidents as Van Buren and Tyler, the illicit trade continued. The opposition of those engaged in the domestic slave trading business did not prevent southern commercial conventions by the 1850's from adopting resolutions calling for the removal of all restrictions on importations. According to Stephen A. Douglas, more slaves were brought into the United States in 1859 than in any year prior to 1808. One estimate of the slaves imported into the United States illegally during the years from 1808 to 1860 places the total at 250,000.

SLAVE LIFE

Recent research has produced a number of important revisions in the history of slave ownership and plantation life. For one thing, fully three-fourths of the 8,000,000 whites in the South by 1860 had neither slaves nor an immediate interest in slavery as an economic institution. Of the 384,900 slave owners, approximately 338,000, or 88 per cent, had fewer than twenty slaves, while more than 200,000 of these had five slaves or less. Large planters had an influence far out of proportion to their number, probably because most of the stable crops were produced on plantations rather than farms – plantations which depended exclusively upon slave labor. In addition, non-slaveholding whites often aspired to the status of the planter and his class, adopting their customs and giving them support in their defense of slavery.

Most accounts of slave life are based upon observations made of the larger plantations. Since the plantation owner was in almost every sense a businessman as well as a farmer, he kept detailed records, and these have been widely used to compose a picture of slave life. The smaller farmers, who owned a number of the slaves, generally kept no such careful accounts, and records that survived have only recently been studied. Historians today tend to discount the glamour and comforts of Southern agrarian life and the paternalistic, easy-going ways of masters and their kinfolk. While Scarlett O'Hara's "Tara" may have had its real-life counterpart, even the Monticello of Thomas Jefferson was atypical with its gentle master, its loyal and devoted slaves, and its occasional manumissions.

The slave, after all, represented a considerable investment. By 1860, prime field hands were selling for as much as $1,800 in New Orleans, a substantial sum when converted into the dollar of today. As a major capital investment the slave had to produce and planter and farmer saw to it that he did. His work was primarily agricultural. While 400,000 slaves lived in towns and cities in 1850, approximately 2,800,000 slaves worked on farms and plantations. Of these, 1,800,000 were to be found on cotton plantations, while the remainder were engaged in the cultivation of tobacco, rice, and sugar cane.

The larger plantations had two distinct groups of workers – the house servants and the field hands. On the farms where the bulk of the slaves were kept, the division was often indistinct, most slaves being used in the fields. Plantation house servants cared for the house, yards, and gardens; cooked the meals; drove and repaired the carriages; and performed a variety of personal services. Often among the slaves were a number of highly skilled artisans and mechanics – nailmakers, smiths, carpenters, builders, and the like, as well as others skilled in doctoring, infant care, and in educating the younger children. Some were renowned for their skills; Jefferson's cook had learned his trade while with his master in Paris and Philadelphia, and before Jefferson would manumit him, he insisted that he teach another slave his art. The field slaves generally worked under the supervision of their owner or an overseer, and it was the latter who was most often accused, and usually justly so, of being negligent, careless, and brutal.

By and large, slaves could expect only the bare necessities of life. Their housing was particularly poor, consisting of rude, windowless cabins often without flooring. Their food consisted of meal, poor grades of meat, and some fish, the latter more often than not the result of the slave's own efforts and ability to find a free hour. The master's preoccupation with raising a "cash" crop frequently resulted in a scarcity of plantation-grown foods and homespun. In the later days of the Cotton Kingdom the planter came to depend more and more on the West for foodstuffs and on the North for inexpensive textiles. While the house servant might be given the cast-off clothing of the master and his family, the average slave wore the most inexpensive garments that could be obtained.

Except for the summer "lay-by," Christmas, and family occasions, the slave had little leisure. He worked from dawn to dusk and used the few hours available to him in the evening for working a small garden or for hunting or fishing. This was an age when both free and slave worked long hours, but the slave could never enjoy the fruits of his labor, the comfort of a family life free from the threat of sale and dispersal, the prospects of a "golden age" or even the memories of a happy childhood; elderly slaves could tend the children, and, while the very young slave child would romp with the children of the master, slaves of eight, nine, or ten years of age were considered old enough to assist the artisans or work in the fields. Even as a child, the slave knew his status well.

THE SLAVE CODES

The image of a docile, submissive, and content slave force is a difficult one to substantiate. Slaves were often described in such terms by the masters themselves, but it should be remembered that, once the slaveholder was on the defensive, he had to justify his system by showing that concord and harmony reigned throughout his kingdom. His slave codes contradict his claims. Judging by their severity – both in writing and enforcement – one may well conclude that the slaveholder lived in constant fear of uprisings and rebellions, that the Cotton Kingdom was precursor to the modern totalitarian state, and that a kind of civil war was forever imminent. The slave codes covered every aspect of the slave's life. Although they varied from state to state, their provisions were quite similar. They were based upon the assumption – founded in law – that slaves were property rather than persons. The codes, moreover, were laws to protect the ownership of property rather than the property itself; in a sense, they were designed to protect the owner *from* his property and from any dangers that might arise from the presence of large numbers of slaves. They subordinated the slave to the authority of the master, making the slave in every respect dependent upon the master's judgment or whim. The slave had to obtain written permission to leave the plantation. He could not make a contract or hire himself out to other men. He had no standing in court and could neither sue nor be sued. He could not strike white people, even in his own defense, and he could not testify against them. He could not assemble with other slaves unless a white person was present, nor receive, possess, or pass on any literature calculated to incite insurrections. In Mississippi he could not blow a horn or beat a drum.

Slaves who violated the codes could be tried in the regular courts or, in some states, by special tribunals. Petty offenses were punished by whipping, more serious ones by branding, imprisonment or death. Conspiracy to rebel was a capital offense in all slaveholding states. There was considerable reluctance to deprive masters of their slaves' services by prolonged imprisonment or execution, and proceedings were carefully conducted. However, due process of law and justice were invariably absent from such trials; slaves were often punished for crimes they did not commit or for conspiracies about which they knew nothing. Patrols were organized to enforce the slave codes and free white men were assigned to police areas or "beats" for periods ranging from one to six months. During periods of emergency created by actual or threatened insurrection, these patrols were superseded by special vigilance committees which threw all caution and prudence to the wind.

THE SLAVE REBELS

Slavery and slave rebellion have been inseparable companions throughout history, and American history offers no exception. The Negro slave rebelled and he did so on countless occasions and in numerous ways. Some of his techniques he carefully and deliberately hid from the master. Over the years the slave had come to be a good judge of the realities of his situation; he learned to evaluate the conditions under which he was compelled to operate, to sense the limitations of a particular course of action, and to disguise his resentment if this were necessary for his survival. He could safely sing about his longing for freedom, for the master saw in the spiritual an expression of sentiment rather than an incitement to rebellion. He could plead ignorance as an excuse for sabotage, for the master had loudly proclaimed his ignorance as an excuse for servitude. The slave learned to run away, to feign illness and laziness, to slow down his work in order to express his resentment; the withholding of labor became his principal weapon of rebellion. He would often inflict injury upon himself to escape being sold and to keep his family intact; and failing in this, he might attempt suicide – thus destroying the master's property for his life was not his own. Sometimes slave mothers killed their own children to prevent them from growing up in slavery. By its very nature the institution of slavery fostered hostility between master and servant, and while such hostility was often covert, it could at times erupt into violence and bloodshed.

Bloodshed and violence were almost always present when the slaves conspired to revolt, for revolts were born of utter desperation. As John Hope Franklin has observed, revolts "were a part of the institution, a kind of bitterness that the whites had to take along with the sweetness of slavery." They occurred throughout the period of enslavement, and while many were confined to individual plantations or counties, at least three were of major proportions.

The first, the so-called Gabriel Plot, occurred in Virginia in 1800 under the leadership of Gabriel Prosser and Jack Bowler. On August 30, after months of planning, over a thousand slaves assembled six miles outside of Richmond and began a march on the city. However, two of the slaves had already informed the whites, and under orders from Governor Monroe, more than six hundred troops and an alerted militia stood ready to meet the insurgents. In due course scores of slaves were arrested and thirty-five were executed. Gabriel Prosser was captured almost two months later and, after he refused to talk to anyone, was hanged. As was usual after such events there ensued a period of restlessness and uneasiness among Negroes and whites and heightened tension culminated in several other plots of relatively short duration.

The second major slave revolt, the Denmark Vesey insurrection, took place in Charleston, South Carolina in 1822. Vesey was a former slave who had purchased his freedom in 1800 and was earning a respectable living as a carpenter. He had carefully planned this revolt for a number of years. When word of the plot leaked out, the whites began to round up the suspects. At least 139 Negroes were arrested, forty-seven of whom were condemned. Four white men were fined and imprisoned for encouraging Vesey in his work.

The Nat Turner insurrection, which occurred in 1831 in Southampton County, Virginia, took place at a time when the entire South was apprehensive over possible uprisings, and it proved to be one of the most violent explosions of the period. Turner was a mystical, rebellious person who had once run away only to return to his master. On August 21, after a number of revelations and postponements, Turner and his followers killed his master and his family. The revolt spread rapidly until the main group of Negroes were overpowered by state and federal troops. When it was over more than fifty-seven whites and one hundred Negroes had been killed, while thirteen slaves and three free Negroes were immediately hanged upon capture. Turner was captured on October 30 and was executed less than two weeks later. The South was shaken severely by the uprising, and several state legislatures were called into emergency session to strengthen their slave codes and to take other measures to supress rebellions. They failed to accomplish this last goal, however, for uprisings continued to terrorize the section.

MANUMISSION, COLONIZATION, AND THE ANTISLAVERY CRUSADE

The year of the Turner Rebellion, 1831, is another turning point in Negro history. It marked the beginning of a new era of stringent slave code enforcement and of further reductions in the slave's mobility. Legislation after 1831 almost ended the slave's attendance at meetings, his few educational opportunities, and his chances for manumission. By 1860 ten states had constitutional provisions curbing either statutory or voluntary emancipation or both.

The colonization movement, an attempt to send manumitted Negroes out of the country, began to decline after 1831. As far back as 1776 Jefferson had proposed a plan for African colonization of the Negro, but the movement intensified after the establishment of the American Colonization Society in 1817. The impulse for colonization came chiefly from the South. Out of 143 "emancipation" societies in the United States in 1826, 103 were in the South. Although the colonization movement may be regarded as one aspect of the humanitarian crusade of this period, the motives of its sponsors were not always strictly humanitarian. Free Negroes, numbering 319,000 by 1830, constituted an important element of the population of southern towns and cities, and their presence was a constant source of embarrassment to the planters. Although their liberties were always seriously curtailed by laws if not by tradition, the very existence of free Negroes tended to undermine the foundation upon which slavery was built, and many Southerners as well as Northerners preferred them to leave the country. Despite the success of the Colonization Society in settling 1,420 Negroes in Liberia by 1831, the motives behind the movement had become more recognizable, and Negro and white abolitionists turned upon the scheme. Although a few Negroes supported colonization, the vast majority were bitterly opposed to it. Acculturation had severed the ties with Africa and the Negro had come to think of himself as a man of the New World.

The year 1831 saw the formation of the New England Antislavery Society and also the publication of the first number of *The Liberator* by William Lloyd Garrison. These two events may be regarded as evidence of a new direction in the antislavery crusade. As the manumission and colonization movement declined after 1831, it was being replaced by a more militant and outspoken effort which sought the immediate emancipation of the slave and the abolition of the institution which had become firmly entrenched in American life.

The story of abolitionism is that of a long and hard-fought crusade, and important details of its history may be found in almost all the textbooks. It was primarily a moral crusade, and its historical function was to make the issue of slavery a moral issue. Historians differ in their estimates of the extent to which abolitionism influenced the course of events after 1831, but few have denied that it helped to cause the Civil War. Louis Filler, in his recent study of *The Crusade Against Slavery*, concludes that it "built up a power which raised it from a reform enterprise to a revolutionary movement which has not yet run its course."

Both whites and Negroes participated in the abolitionist movement. To the names of such white abolitionists as Garrison, Benjamin Lundy, Theodore Weld, James G. Birney, Horace Greeley, Elijah Lovejoy, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, John Greenleaf Whittier, Wendell Phillips, Lucretia Mott, and the Grimké sisters must be added the names of such prominent Negroes as David Walker, Frederick Douglass, David Ruggles, Charles Remond, Henry Highland Garnet, William Wells Brown, Theodore S. Wright, James Forten, and Samuel Ringgold Ward. Sojourner Truth, the well-known crusader, traveled through New England and the West, moving her audiences with her quaint speech, her deep, resonant voice, and her hatred of slavery, which she described with a mystical sensitivity. Nor should one forget the immortal Harriet

Tubman, the courageous "Moses" of the Underground Railroad, who guided over 300 slaves to freedom and who hired herself out as a domestic servant to supplement abolitionist funds given her for her work.

Frederick Douglass was pre-eminent among the Negro abolitionists, and he served as a major spokesman for the Negro throughout much of the nineteenth century. Born in 1817, Douglass was barely into his twenties when he escaped from Baltimore to New York and freedom. Largely self-taught, he soon began attending abolitionist meetings. After he delivered a moving address at a convention of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society in 1841, he was named a lecturing agent of that group. He also became a first-class writer and his autobiographical *Narrative* was soon a best-seller. To avoid possible reenslavement, he went to Europe in 1845 and remained there for two years. Upon his return he bought his freedom, established an abolitionist paper, continued his lectures, and joined in movements to promote industrial education and woman suffrage. An adviser to John Brown, he fled to Canada and the British Isles after the raid on Harpers Ferry. During the Civil War, Douglass helped to raise Negro regiments and agitated for Negro suffrage and civil rights. Before his death in 1895 he served as secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission, marshal and recorder of deeds of the District of Columbia, and United States consul general to Haiti. His great achievement during the pre-war period may be measured in terms of the abuse heaped upon him by the antiabolitionists, and by their inability to distinguish their contempt for him from that shown to his white compatriots.

THE SLAVEHOLDERS' DEFENSE

During the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century, Southern slaveholders — provoked by political debates over the westward extension of slavery, by slave insurrection, and by the violent abolitionist attacks against them — began a defense of slavery more vigorous than that ever before undertaken. In the war of words that ensued, such writers as Edward Brown, Thomas R. Dew, George S. Sawyer, George Fitzhugh, and Beverly Tucker were the principal protagonists of slavery. They asserted that slave labor was essential to the South's economic development and prosperity and that Negro slavery enabled the white race to develop a unique and high degree of culture. The Negro, they believed, was destined to occupy a subordinate social position; his enslavement was sanctioned by Christianity as a means of converting him from heathenism. Such themes as the mildness of slave life, the benevolent paternalism of masters, and the cruel neglect of freed Negroes and factory workers in the North became popular among Southern writers, orators, and political spokesmen, and they were frequently interspersed among weightier arguments based on economics, history, sociology, and theology.

Fundamental to the pro-slavery position was a theory of racial inferiority and biological inequality – a theory that had evolved through the years together with the institution that nurtured it. It will be recalled that the emergence of slavery from indentured servitude during the second half of the seventeenth century resulted in part from the conviction that the Negro was naturally inferior to the white man. During the eighteenth century, slaveholders acknowledged the possibility that political evils might result from slavery. But few would support the belief that slavery constituted a moral evil and none would brook political interference with the institution from colonial legislatures or from Parliament. No inconsistency was seen in the slaveholders' support of the pre-revolutionary doctrines of the natural rights of man and the rights of Englishmen; slaves were regarded as chattel, not as men or Englishmen. The elimination of the antislavery section from the Declaration of Independence and the insertion into the Constitution of clauses safeguarding the rights of slaveholders caused little popular consternation, while the post-revolutionary manumission movement and the abolitionist crusade of the 1830's enlisted little popular support. When Southerners began to describe slavery as a "positive good" rather than as a "necessary evil," they were openly expressing a racist ideology which had already fastened itself upon the mind of the South, if not upon that of the nation as a whole.

After 1830, it became increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to penetrate the aura of conformity that surrounded the Cotton Kingdom. The Southern defense of the slave system quickened an exodus to the North and West of moderates who heretofore could raise their voice in protest, treat controversy as controversy, or withhold judgment. It popularized the misconception that the Negro's status as a slave was an inherent characteristic of his race, and in doing so, it expiated much of the guilt that remained in slave ownership.

The ideology of white supremacy that emerged in antebellum times left an indelible mark upon its adherents and their progeny. It has withstood civil war, the opprobrium of scientists, and the democratic and intellectual revolutions of the twentieth century. It may well be one of the most durable and costly legacies of the slavery period in American history.

THE GREAT DEBATE AND THE CIVIL WAR

The end of the Mexican War in 1848 and the acquisition of the so-called Mexican Cession brought the issue of slavery in the territories to the forefront of national politics. From the time of the Missouri Compromise in 1820, the slavery question generally was dormant in the national legislature. It was revived occasionally by abolitionist petitions, "gag" resolutions, and applications for the admission of slave states that threatened to upset the senatorial balance between North and South. Following earlier precedent and law, the admission of Florida and Texas as slave states during the 1840's was closely followed by the admission of Iowa and Wisconsin as free states. In this way the basic settlement of the Missouri Compromise was maintained. Sectional divisions multiplied over the Mexican War and the disposition of the territory it added to the national domain, and these proved to be only temporarily halted by the Compromise of 1850. The publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852, the increasing effectiveness of the Underground Railroad, and the efforts to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 kept the issue of slavery before the people.

The interlude of relative calm after the Compromise of 1850 ended with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which abolished the old 36° 30′ line of the Missouri Compromise by allowing territories to decide for themselves the status of slavery within their borders. The Kansas-Nebraska Act "puts freedom and slavery face to face and bids them grapple," and the results were "Bleeding Kansas" and the formation of the Republican party to unite antislavery Whigs and Democrats. Controversies over the Supreme Court's decision in the Dred Scott case in 1857, John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859, and the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 resulted finally in secession, and actual warfare commenced at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861.

Why did the North and South go to war? The debate over this question has already filled many library shelves and seems destined to continue. Some historians stress basic differences in the economic and social systems of the contending sections, differences that appeared to sharpen with the passage of time. Others point out that disagreements over the tariff, over money and banking, over internal improvements at federal expense, and over the disposal of public lands had already divided the sections, paving the way for the ultimate division. Others stress the issue of states' rights and related questions of a constitutional nature that plagued the nation almost from the beginning. Others place the blame on extremists of both sides, minorities within their respective sections, who failed to recognize that both time and nature had already conspired to halt the extension of slavery in much of the West. And still others stress the conflict over slavery itself, some of these insisting that this was a moral as well as a political, economic, and social issue. There is among historians today a renewed emphasis on this last interpretation.

In any case, while Lincoln had opposed slavery on moral grounds, he came to the presidential office even more strongly convinced that the preservation of the Union rather than the discontinuance of slavery constituted his major task. Before his death he was to see the problem of Negro slavery become an American problem, and the Civil War a revolutionary effort to extend both union and liberty to America's fettered race.

Chapter 6

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY: 1861-1877

There was little evidence in the North during the early months of the Civil War that the conflict to preserve the Union was going to become a war for emancipation and freedom. Free Negroes attempting to enlist in the Union army were meeting with immediate rejection. Fugitive slaves seeking refuge within the federal lines were being ordered by some commanders to return to masters known to have remained loyal to the Union. Other runaways who had been used to construct Confederate defenses were being declared "contraband of war" and put to work under officials who continued to treat them as slaves. The outbreak of hostilities had had no visible effect upon the legal status of thousands of slaves in the loyal border states of Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri. To the dismay of the abolitionists, neither federal policy nor popular sentiment indicated any widespread support for a war against slavery; on the contrary, opponents of abolitionism in Congress and throughout the North were making it abundantly clear that the loyalty of thousands would be sacrificed by any attempt to make the emancipation of slaves an avowed Northern war aim. Abolitionist disenchantment with the Lincoln administration quickened after the attack on Fort Sumter; to many antislavery men, the President's failure to act swiftly against slavery and to make provisions for fugitive slaves and Negro enlistments amounted to an early betrayal of the principles of his party and the nation.

LINCOLN AND SLAVERY

Lincoln was neither abolitionist nor proslavery when he came to the presidency, nor were his basic views on the slavery question changed by the outbreak of war. He had been chosen as the presidential candidate of the Republican party largely because he was a moderate on the issue, and he remained a moderate during his first two years as President, if not thereafter. His opposition to slavery on humanitarian grounds was as well-known to his contemporaries as was his belief that the federal government had no right to prohibit slavery in the states of the South. As early as 1837, Lincoln had introduced resolutions in the Illinois legislature "that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy; but that the promulgation of abolition doctrine tends rather to increase than to abate its evils." While Lincoln opposed abolitionism and federal interference with slavery in the states, he also believed that Congress could and should prohibit the extension of slavery into the western territories. His paramount concern in supporting such action was for the welfare of poor free settlers; he feared their security would be threatened by allowing slave labor to compete with free labor within the new territories. As President-elect, Lincoln rejected an effort to prevent secession by dividing the territories between slavery and freedom; he insisted upon the complete exclusion of slavery from the territories, but he would promise to let it alone in the states and to advocate a stringent enforcement of the fugitive slave laws.

It had long been Lincoln's hope that, ultimately, slavery itself would be brought to an end. This, he believed, could best be accomplished by the government with the consent of the voters and the compensation of the slaveholders. He had proposed such measures to end slavery in the District of Columbia while he was in the Illinois legislature in 1837 and in the House of Representatives in 1849. Lincoln saw in colonization the most satisfactory solution to the problems of the freedmen. In 1862, he told a group of prominent free Negroes:

> Your race suffer greatly, many of them, by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word, we suffer on each side. If this is admitted, it affords a reason why we should be separated.

Voluntary colonization, Lincoln felt, offered the Negro his best escape from the inherited prejudices of the white community.

Lincoln's early wartime policies with regard to both enslaved and free Negroes reflected his primary concern to unite divergent Northern interests in support of a war to preserve the Union. To free the slaves in rebellious states – their secession would never be recognized as constitutional by Lincoln – would confirm the pre-war Southern charge that he had planned an immediate end to slavery within the states. Federal action to emancipate slaves in the four loyal border states would cause the loss of these states to the Union, endanger the national capital, and jeopardize the successful outcome of the war. To permit the retention of runaway slaves and Negro enlistments would alienate many loyal slaveowners and create widespread dissension throughout the North. To make Negro freedom an official war aim would permanently disrupt the Union, possibly leaving no government at all to see to the gradual emancipation and voluntary colonization of the Negro. Lincoln preferred to contend with the abolitionists rather than risk the loss of the war and hasten the collapse of the nation he was fighting to preserve. "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union and is not either to save or destroy slavery," he wrote to Horace Greeley more than a year after the war had begun.

> If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union. . . .

As T. Harry Williams, the noted historian, has observed, Lincoln proposed "to conduct the war for the preservation of the status quo which had produced the war."

Runaways, Relief, and Recruitment

As the conflict wore on, military pressures modified political considerations and moved the Lincoln administration toward a more forthright stand for fugitive slaves and free Negroes seeking to enlist in the Union armies. Runaways poured into the lines by the thousands as the Union forces pushed to the South and West; their exodus was disrupting the Southern economy and compounding the difficulties of Northern field commanders left by Lincoln to establish their own fugitive slave policies. Some officers wished to free all the runaways, while others urged their prompt return. Criticisms of the administration mounted in July, 1861, when it became known that General Winfield Scott, acting for the President, had written to Brigadier General Irvin McDowell on behalf of Virginia slaveowners seeking to recover fugitive slaves within the Union lines. The result was the abandonment of efforts to return slaves to their owners and the passage of the Confiscation Act of August 6, 1861. This act provided judicial processes through which runaways who had been used for insurrectionary purposes could be granted their freedom. Although the military emancipation of slaves was to continue to trouble the administration, fugitives could now be received and begin the transition toward independence.

Federal authorities found it even more difficult to provide for the relief and employment of fugitive slaves than to agree upon their retention. At first each commanding officer was left to his own devices, and provisions for the "contraband" varied from one command to another. Negroes were frequently placed in special camps in which living conditions were wretched and mortality rates high. In Tennessee, they were leased out to loyal planters. In the South, abandoned land was given to Negro families and superintendents were appointed to see that provisions for employment and aid were carried out. Controversy between the Treasury and War Departments over the administration of Negro affairs precluded early and effective relief for the freedmen; a number of government agencies were then organized to provide needed assistance, and these were gradually absorbed into the Freedmen's Bureau. During the early war years they proved inadequate to their tasks, and it soon became apparent that additional help was needed. Numerous individuals of both races came to the aid of the former slaves, and a number of private freedmen's relief associations were established to supplement the work of the government agencies. These organizations were particularly successful in providing educational facilities for the freedmen. Illiteracy, enforced upon the slave by the ideology and codes of the slave system, rapidly became the principal target of the freedman and his benefactors.

It was not until almost two years after the war had begun that a definitive policy regarding Negro soldiers was formulated. Opposition from civilians in the border states and white Northerners generally – including soldiers – prevailed over the efforts of such men as William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Frederick Douglass to gain for Negroes the right to fight for their own freedom. Fugitive slaves and free Negroes worked in the encampments as laborers, cooks, teamsters, and servants, but it was official policy not to give them the weapons of war. Military pressures ultimately reversed the policy. In October, 1861, authorization was given for the arming of a few fugitives, but General David Hunter, who subsequently used this authorization to activate a Negro regiment, was ordered to disband the group. Lincoln permitted some Negro enlistments late in 1862 and from that time on such service was encouraged. Free Negro leaders like Frederick Douglass served as recruiting agents, conducting rallies and publishing appeals in the Negro press to encourage military service. The response was enthusiastic; by the end of the war more than 186,000 Negroes had enlisted in the Union army.

Negroes who had resented their exclusion from the army could look with some misgivings at the conditions under which they served once their enlistment was permitted. Designated as "United States Colored Troops," they were placed in segregated regiments generally led by white commissioned officers. Many of these commanders had accepted their assignments with considerable reluctance and some openly vented their hostility on their troops. Until 1864, Negro soldiers received less pay than white soldiers of equal rank. They were given excessive fatigue details or were rushed into battle with a minimum of preparation and the poorest equipment. Those captured by Southern troops before 1864 suffered the treatment of insurrectionary slaves rather than prisoners of war; some were sold into slavery while others were deliberately killed as an example to their race. More than 38,000 Negro troops lost their lives during the Civil War; the high mortality rate among Negro soldiers was in no small way the result of the unfavorable conditions under which they lived and fought.

Those Negro combatants who survived the holocaust could look back with pride rather than with bitterness at their role in the conflict. Among them were numerous spies and scouts who had confounded the enemy with their intimate knowlege of the South and the ease with which they passed as slaves. Others had guided Union troops across unfamiliar terrain and had steered federal gunboats through dangerous waters. Some Negroes – fewer than a hundred – had given invaluable leadership as commissioned officers assigned to command posts, medical units, and chaplaincies. A larger number of non-commissioned officers had prepared men of varied experiences for the dreadful experience of war, and had learned for themselves the difficulties and the possibilities of leadership. An entire regiment of Negroes had mastered techniques of peaceful protest by refusing to accept discriminatory wages, choosing instead to serve without pay for a year to demonstrate their devotion to their country. Negro veterans could have described all the horrors and miseries of the war, for they had seen action in every sector and theater of operation. They had witnessed the exploits of gallant officers, men of both races who had respect for their troops' courage and determination and who learned with them important lessons about the brotherhood of man. And they could find inspiration in the numerous acts of bravery which brought Negroes twenty-two Congressional Medals of Honor, countless expressions of tribute, and the admiration of their countrymen. In their fight for the Union, Negro soldiers had made the freedom of their people more certain.

Away from Slavery

The pursuit of victory released forces which changed Northern public opinion on the slavery question and led Lincoln to modify his initial conservatism and his course. As the war lengthened, more and more Notherners came to regard slavery itself as responsible for the South's tenacity and strength. Men who had refrained from antislavery talk before secession began to urge the destruction of slavery as the most effective way of hastening the end of the war. In September, 1861, Lincoln disavowed General Fremont's proclamation freeing the slaves of rebelling Missourians. Dictated by constitutional, strategic, and political considerations, the President's action brought a new storm of Radical protest. Another followed when he overruled the May, 1862, order of General Hunter freeing slaves in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina.

After a year of war, constitutional questions had become less important than military necessity to many Northerners. Slaves – the greatest single wartime resource of the Confederacy – were being used by the secessionists to prolong the war. It seemed senseless to discourage slaves from freeing themselves and cease working for the South; to withhold their freedom in areas occupied by the Union army had become absurd.

Lincoln's efforts to promote gradual, compensated emancipation met with continual opposition. Throughout the fall of 1861 and the spring of 1862, slaveholders within the border states consistently rejected every offer of federal funds to induce their support of plans for gradual emancipation. On April 16, 1862, a law was enacted which abolished slavery in the District of Columbia. It provided funds for the voluntary colonization of the freedmen – a project which eventually met with failure – and for a maximum payment of $300 for each slave. The measure brought further protests against emancipation from the border states and renewed criticism from the Radicals who opposed paying slaveholders for property they had no right to possess.

Lincoln began to move toward a more radical position after May, 1862. Slavery was abolished in the territories on June 19 without provision for the compensation of owners. On July 17, a second Confiscation Act was passed which granted freedom to all slaves coming from disloyal masters into Union-held territory. Finally, to free all slaves in rebellious states, Lincoln issued a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, five days after the Union victory at Antietam. In it, he again held out the possibility of compensated emancipation and voluntary colonization, and he proclaimed that on January 1, 1863, "all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of the State, the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." Should a rebellious state return its representatives to Congress before the one hundred days had elapsed, it would no longer be regarded as in rebellion; its slaves would then be exempt from the emancipatory provision of the final proclamation.

The Emancipation Proclamation that was issued on New Year's Day was a prosaic document which read like a memorandum rather than a great state paper. It decreed the freedom of all slaves in the rebellious areas – areas over which the federal government had no effective control – and it specifically exempted from emancipation all slaves in regions under federal control or military occupation. It enjoined the new freedmen to labor faithfully for wages and to refrain from unnecessary violence, and it encouraged their service in the Union army. The document contained its own justification: it was a "fit and necessary war measure" being taken by the Commander-in-Chief to suppress rebellion, "an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity."

Lincoln's proclamation had little immediate effect as a practical measure freeing the slaves. It went no further than Congress had already gone on emancipation in the second Confiscation Act of July 17, 1862. It conferred legal but not actual emancipation on three-fourths of the slaves, and left an estimated 800,000 Negroes in both legal and actual enslavement.

In its ultimate effects, the Emancipation Proclamation turned the tide of war toward Negro freedom and Union victory. It induced further slave desertions in the South, depriving the Confederacy of more of its labor force, and it gave hope to millions of Negroes in both sections that genuine freedom lay ahead. It increased Northern sentiment for abolition and engendered support for the North in England and throughout Europe. It resolved once and for all the problems of military emancipation and it brought Abraham Lincoln and the federal government toward the final step of constitutional emancipation – a step taken on January 31, 1865 when Congress approved the Thirteenth Amendment, and completed on December 18 with the Amendment's ratification.

"I know very well that the name connected with this document will never be forgotten," Abraham Lincoln said afterward in reference to the Emancipation Proclamation. If he had had to be more conservative than others to win the presidency and halt secession, then he could also be more liberal than others to meet military necessity and rid the nation of slavery. As President of all the United States he felt he could not allow personal desire to lead him toward a goal without being convinced that the nation would support his action. As a practical politician, he had to await the coalescence of divergent forces before acting against slavery; to have done so prematurely would have endangered both freedom and union. The growth of abolitionist sentiment, the willingness shown by "contrabands" to work and fight to free themselves, the need to put new meaning into a deteriorating war situation, the increasing pressures of European opinion on American diplomacy – these were some of the forces that began to congeal late in 1862 and that made possible Lincoln's proclamations, the Thirteenth Amendment, and the final drive toward victory. Lincoln's astuteness and wisdom and his successful conduct of the war ensured the permanency of both the Union and emancipation, and in this lies his claim to glory.

RECONSTRUCTING THE NATION

The years 1865 and 1877 – traditionally used by historians to designate the beginning and end of the Reconstruction Era – are pivotal in American history and in the history of America's Negroes. The year which witnessed the victory of North over South, of union over secession, and of federal sovereignty over that of the states saw also the ending of almost two hundred and fifty years of Negro slavery. It was a year of promise, not only for the freedmen but for Americans of every race and section, a year in which the American dream again began to move toward fulfillment. The nation had survived the threat of extinction and had gained a chance to mend the torn fabric of its democracy.

The era that began in triumph ended in tragedy. By 1877, the year in which the last federal troops were withdrawn from the South, the hopes and chances, the promises and opportunities of 1865, were almost at an end. The formal termination of Reconstruction left Negroes nearer to slavery than to freedom, white Southerners again victims of a restored Old Order, and Northerners derelict from a moral commitment made twelve years before. The complete restoration of Southern "home rule" in 1877 marked the triumph of a revitalized racist ideology and the abandonment of fundamental democratic values; it left the vision of Lincoln an unfulfilled dream of the American past, and his martyrdom a mockery of a new and different age. By 1877, the victory of 1865 had been turned into a tragic defeat.

If a changed America had made victory and emancipation possible, a changing America complicated the tasks of post-war reconstruction and prepared the way for the rapid subjugation of four million freedmen. A different land awaited the returning Union veteran. The North's agriculture had prospered from the increased demand of the war years, while its railroads, aided by government subsidies and land grants, had pushed further west. Most striking in the North was the emergence of an energetic industrial economy, stimulated during the war by government contracts, currency inflation, and protective tariff legislation. Profiteering, a by-product of the wartime business boom, led to widespread fraudulence and deceit within the post-war industrial and financial community, and commercial immorality crept into the political arena. As Northerners became preoccupied with material gain, their zeal for reform declined. The vanquished South was a promising frontier for Yankee businessmen. New Northern leaders, men like James G. Blaine and Roscoe Conkling, seemed less concerned with improving Southern racial relations than with protecting Northern business interests in the South's redevelopment. They feared that a politically restored South would threaten the new alliance between businessmen and government, and that Southern hostility toward the North would jeopardize business opportunities and undermine the new industrial order.

The South, too, had changed. The Confederacy – now eleven states out of the Union and at the mercy of the North – had emerged from the war in devastation and ruin. Its economy was smashed, and its resources and hopes for the future were meager. Seven Southern states were without civil authority. Thousands of white refugees and freedmen wandered across the South, the former homeless and bitter, the latter homeless and uncertain about their freedom. A legacy of hate hung over the land. Northern and foreign observers found the former Confederates more conquered than subdued in the months following Appomattox. They had accepted military defeat, but they were attached to their way of life as before, and they were determined to preserve what was left of it. As the shock of defeat lessened, it became apparent to many Southerners that all was not lost. Much of the land had been destroyed by war, but much remained untouched, and land could always be cultivated again. White Southerners had expected defeat to bring the wrath of the Negro upon them; they soon realized that their fears were groundless, that their labor force still existed in the Negro population of the South, and that it was a labor force that could be worked largely on their own terms. The South needed capital, of course, and the North could fill its initial needs. Some Southerners, expecting their section to follow the North's example in moving toward greater industrialization, hoped to see the South develop its own investment sources. The South of 1865 was clearly not the Confederacy of 1861.

The political problems involved in restoring the seceded states to the Union, made difficult by the changing economic and social conditions of the post-war period, were further complicated by a number of unrelated political developments. There was an inevitable reaction in Congress and throughout the nation during the last years of the war to the President's use of his enormous war powers, and the movement grew stronger after Appomattox to restore the balance of power among the three branches of the federal government. Lincoln's assassination and the accession of Andrew Johnson made Congress even more determined than before to exercise its prerogatives in governing the country. The political waters, already stirred by widespread corruption and extravagance in government, were clouded by the inadequate political experiences of the freedmen, the millions of European immigrants who came to America during the post-war years, and the large number of displaced farmers who sought work in the factory towns and cities. Economic rivalry among Negroes, immigrants, and ex-farmers was particularly acute in urban areas – the New York City draft riots of 1863 were closely connected with the competition between Negroes and whites for work – and all three groups easily fell prey to corrupt city politicians. The national political structure rested then as now upon local politics, and its response to the problems of political reconstruction was conditioned by the state of local political affairs.

The term "reconstruction," used during and following the Civil War to describe the restoration of loyal governments in the South, has a far broader meaning to historians today. As John D. Hicks has observed, it "must include all the drastic transformations of the period, both North and South." A new United States had emerged from the old, and the fate of the freedmen was inseparably bound to the problems of reconstructing the nation.

PRESIDENTIAL RECONSTRUCTION

The occupation of southern areas confronted Lincoln with the need for establishing reconstruction policies early in the war years. In 1862, he appointed military governors for three states and gave them complete power pending the establishment of civil authority. In December, 1863, the President presented to Congress his over-all plan for reconstruction and issued a Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction containing its basic features. Since he considered reconstruction an executive function necessitated by the rebellion of citizens rather than states, he proposed to use presidential powers to restore the states to the Union. Excepting certain high Confederate officials, Lincoln extended general amnesty to the people of the South and called on them to swear allegiance to the United States. When persons equal in number to one-tenth the 1860 electorate had taken the oath and established a government agreed upon emancipation, he would recognize that government. As for the Negroes, the various federal government agencies would administer to their needs. Lincoln's plan had excluded them from participating in the process of political restoration. The President hoped that voting rights would be granted a few Negroes with education, property, or outstanding war records, but his subsequent effort to induce the new Louisiana legislature to move in this direction met with failure.

Lincoln's reconstruction plans provoked considerable debate within Congress. Some Congressmen voiced strong objections to the President's use of power; others considered his policies toward the South far too lenient; still others feared his program would result in the rapid recovery of the South's political influence. In July, 1864, Congress passed the

Wade-Davis bill setting forth its own blueprint for reconstruction. The bill required a majority of the enrolled white citizens to take an oath of past as well as future loyalty before a new state government could be formed; in addition, it required delegates to constitutional conventions, as well as their electors, to take an "ironclad oath" that they had not voluntarily borne arms against the Union, aided insurrectionaries, or held office under the Confederacy. The Wade-Davis bill was pocket-vetoed by Lincoln; in the President's words, it rejected "the Christian principle of forgiveness on terms of repentance." Lincoln was excoriated for the veto by the Radicals in Congress. A bitter Manifesto published by the bill's sponsors in newspapers throughout the country accused the war leader of dictatorial usurpation and defiance of congressional authority. When Arkansas and Louisiana, two reconstructed "Lincoln states," returned their representatives to Congress in 1864, they were denied admission. Before his death, Lincoln had established local civil government in four former Confederate states and had pardoned a number of Confederate officials but his reconstruction policies had not returned a single state to the Union.

Johnson's accession gave the Radicals hope for the success of their program, but the new President quickly adopted Lincoln's reconstruction plan with only minor changes. During the congressional recess Johnson recognized the loyal governments of Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Virginia that Lincoln had organized. In his proclamation of May 29 Johnson duplicated the amnesty provisions of Lincoln's proclamation but added to the excepted classes owners of property exceeding $20,000 in value. Persons so designated had to apply for special pardons, which the President readily granted. Johnson appointed provisional governors to the seven states still unrecognized, empowering them to call conventions to amend the states' constitutions, abolish slavery, and repudiate the states' war debts. By December, 1865, every Confederate state except Texas had fulfilled these requirements, and Texas would soon conform. On December 16, 1865, in his first annual message to Congress, President Johnson announced that the Union was restored. Congress had only to admit the South's representatives to complete the process of reconstruction.

CONFEDERATE RECONSTRUCTION

During the last year of Lincoln's administration and the first of Johnson's, the reviving state governments of the South began to set their own houses in order. Although excluded from Congress, prominent Confederates pardoned by Lincoln and Johnson – and some not pardoned – found their old places awaiting them in the local and state councils, and began to exercise a remarkable degree of home rule. The former slaves constituted their greatest concern. While white Southerners generally recognized and accepted the Negroes' emancipation, they were neither willing nor obliged to confer freedom upon the freedmen. Convinced that the ex-slaves would treat liberty as license, rise up against them, withhold labor, and plunder property, the legislators rapidly enacted a series of laws designed to curb the Negroes and guarantee their labor to the economy. These new statutes closely resembled the Black Codes of antebellum times. The heavy penalties they imposed for vagrancy were calculated to force Negroes to work whether or not they desired to do so. Negroes who quit their jobs could be arrested and imprisoned for breach of contract. Some laws specified the areas in which Negroes could buy or rent property. Negro witnesses could testify only in cases involving members of their race. Among acts proscribed by law were seditious speeches, insulting gestures, absences from work, curfew violations, interracial marriages, and the possession of weapons. None of the legislatures attempted even token enfranchisement of Negroes. When some of them established free public school systems – regarded by many observers as a bold step for the South of this period to take – careful provisions were made to exclude the Negro.

For the Radicals, the actions taken by the Southern state legislatures confirmed their charges of an unrepentant South. No less grating so soon after Appomattox were Southern protests against excessive military occupation (the rapid withdrawal of federal troops notwithstanding), the work of the Freedmen's Bureau, and "outside interference." From May through October, eight Negro conventions met to protest the treatment this new era of peace had brought. By December, 1865 – eight months after the end of the war – Southerners had already begun to glorify their Lost Cause and form secret societies to bring renewed terror to their section. When the Thirty-ninth Congress convened in December, the Radicals were determined to take reconstruction out of the hands of the President. Despite Johnson's announcement, the Union seemed far from restored to the Radicals.

CONGRESSIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

The first official notice Congress gave of its intention to set reconstruction policies was its refusal to seat the representatives from the so-called "Lincoln" and "Johnson" states. The presence of many prominent ex-Confederates among them – the Confederate vice-president, four generals, six cabinet officers, fifty-eight members of the Confederate Congress, and other civil and military officeholders – proved to the Radicals the extent to which the South supported its defeated leaders. To examine the issues of Southern representation and Negro suffrage, and to prepare new reconstruction policies, Thaddeus Stevens, leader of the Radical Republicans, proposed the creation of a Joint Committee of Fifteen. Under his chairmanship, the committee conducted an extensive investigation of conditions in the South and drafted many of the reconstruction measures that were later adopted.

The first major bill the committee proposed involved the Freedmen's Bureau. This agency had been established in March, 1865, as a temporary bureau to care for the freedmen and administer the abandoned lands of the South. Congress now wished to extend its life and empower it to try, by military commission, persons accused of depriving Negroes of civil rights. Johnson vetoed the bill on the grounds that it was unconstitutional and did more for Negroes than had ever been done for whites. The veto was sustained by Congress. A second proposal, the Civil Rights bill, bestowed citizenship upon the Negroes — a step made necessary by the Dred Scott decision of 1857 — and granted the same civil rights to all persons (except Indians) born in the United States. Declaring that Negroes neither desired nor were ready for full citizenship, Johnson vetoed the bill. Now in an angry mood, Congress overrode the veto. Since there was widespread doubt as to the constitutionality of the Civil Rights Act, its major provisions were incorporated into the Fourteenth Amendment, which Congress submitted to the states on June 16, 1866. Four days later, the Joint Committee issued its report recommending the denial of representation to the Confederate states and maintaining the authority of Congress rather than that of the President over the process of reconstruction. When the President vetoed a second Freedmen's Bureau bill in July, 1866, his veto was overridden.

Johnson's vetoes, his condemnation of the proposed Fourteenth Amendment, and his attacks on Thaddeus Stevens, Charles Sumner, and the other Radical leaders placed the struggle over reconstruction squarely before the public. Many Northerners were now convinced that Johnson's sympathies were distinctly pro-Southern, and their opposition to his policies was strengthened by a wave of race riots which broke out in the South during the summer of 1866. Among white Southerners there was renewed optimism. Counting upon the fall Congressional election to repudiate the Radical program, all the Southern states except Tennessee rejected the Fourteenth Amendment. The President saw in the forthcoming election an opportunity to carry his fight to the people, but his abortive attempt to join moderates in a new party antagonized more Northerners and his maladroit speaking tour outraged the nation. In the election, the Republicans captured two-thirds of each house, giving the Radicals effective control of reconstruction.

Determined to deal harshly with the South, Congress passed the Reconstruction Act of 1867 over Johnson's veto. This measure divided the South into five military districts subject to martial law. It required the Southern states to call new constitutional conventions, elected by universal manhood suffrage, which were to establish governments guaranteeing Negro suffrage and ratifying the Fourteenth Amendment. Ex-Confederates disqualified under the proposed amendment were excluded from voting. Congress then proceeded to enact other measures to reconstruct the South through stern and severe treatment and to subordinate the presidency to its will. Its victory marked the triumph of a combination of interests — humanitarian, political, and commercial — seeking substantial gains through Congressional Reconstruction. But its victory also provoked new and bitter conflicts destined to bring even more chaos, disorder, and confusion into an already turbulent era.

THE NEGRO AND RECONSTRUCTION: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

While Congress moved toward the assumption of control over reconstruction, efforts were continued to improve the lot of the former slaves. With the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau in March, 1865, the federal government began a more comprehensive program of service for Negroes than that undertaken during the war years. In providing relief and rehabilitation, the Freedmen's Bureau anticipated later government efforts — particularly during the Depression of the 1930's and following World War II — to solve pressing economic and social problems. Despite corruption, inefficiency, and widespread Southern hostility, the Freedmen's Bureau was notably successful in promoting human welfare during the Reconstruction era. It aided whites and Negroes by furnishing them with supplies and medical services. It supervised the contractual obligations of freedmen and employers, and managed confiscated and abandoned lands, some of which it sold or rented to the ex-slaves. It furnished free transportation to thousands of freedmen so that they could find employment and become self-supporting in less-congested areas, and it organized special courts and arbitration boards to safeguard the Negroes' rights where local courts failed to protect them.

The greatest success of the Freedmen's Bureau was in education. It worked closely with Northern philanthropic and religious organizations to set up or supervise all kinds of schools. Howard University, Hampton Institute, Atlanta University, and Fisk University were among the schools established in this period which received aid from the Bureau. By the time its educational work stopped in 1870, it had spent more than five million dollars in schooling Negroes. Under its auspices scores of thousands learned to read and write.

The Negro church offered considerable spiritual succor to freedmen during the postwar decades and joined with the Freedmen's Bureau and other groups in providing Negroes with material relief. Independent Negro churches had been founded during the colonial and revolutionary periods, but they were proscribed throughout the South in antebellum times. Emancipation ended legal proscriptions, but white congregations continued to bar Negroes from membership. As a result, membership in the older Negro churches grew rapidly after Appomattox and a number of new Negro church organizations were established.

The Freedmen's Bureau and the private philanthropic and religious organizations provided relief rather than permanent economic independence to the freedmen. Negroes had been led to believe that they would be given "forty acres and a mule" by January, 1866, but neither Presidential nor Congressional Reconstruction brought them much land. The freedmen thus returned to the farms as hired workers or sharecroppers. Farm workers who labored for wages frequently received less pay than that given to hired slaves before the war, while sharecroppers often became permanently indebted to their employers as a result of maintenance and credit costs. That Negro agricultural workers helped to restore economic stability to the South is shown by the rapid increase in cotton production; with an agricultural labor force consisting largely of Negroes, the South produced more cotton by 1880 than ever before. Most Negro farm workers, however, were unaware of such progress; their new servile status excluded them from the profits it brought.

While most Negroes remained in rural areas throughout the Reconstruction period, a significant number, motivated largely by the association of slavery with plantation life, migrated to Northern and Southern urban centers. Negro artisans and factory workers encountered considerable opposition from white workers wherever they went. Unscrupulous employers deliberately hired them in order to displace better-paid workers and undermine white labor unions, and the reputation Negroes acquired as a consequence of such practices followed them for many generations thereafter. Negroes were usually denied admission into the ranks of organized labor throughout Reconstruction. The National Negro Labor Union, organized in 1869, had little success in affiliating with white labor. The Negro worker remained an involuntary exile from the organized labor movement for at least another decade.

During the post-war years, some Negroes attempted to achieve economic security in sectors of the economy other than labor. For the most part they met with failure. Inadequate capital and insufficient business experience contributed to the demise of many new Negro-owned business enterprises; those that managed to survive the initial period of operation were for the most part wiped out during the course of the business recessions and financial panics that occurred during the era. In this new industrial age business enterprise was becoming more and more complex, and Negroes were particularly handicapped as they sought to share in a rapidly changing national economy. Few if any managed to do so, for the end of Reconstruction found most Negroes in utter destitution. Neither Negro nor white workers had improved their living conditions significantly by the end of the first post-war decade; of all the failures of Reconstruction, perhaps this was the most tragic.

THE NEGRO IN RECONSTRUCTION POLITICS

The Reconstruction Act of 1867 initiated in the South a period of constitution-making expressly designed by the Radicals to strengthen their position and to erase two years of ex-Confederate home rule. Three groups qualified as electors and delegates to the constitutional conventions required by the act: white Southerners able to take the "ironclad oath"; Northerners who had resided for a year or more in the South; and Negroes eligible to vote. In eight of the ten conventions that assembled, Negroes constituted a minority of the delegates. In Louisiana, membership was equally divided between the two races. The South Carolina convention was the only one in which Negroes predominated. Some of the Negroes at the conventions had been slaves; others were freeborn, and among these were emigrants from the North. While most of the Negro delegates were illiterate – antebellum laws forbade the teaching of reading and writing to free Negroes as well as slaves – a surprising number were university graduates or self-educated. Most of the Negro leaders were ministers and a few were school teachers; some had been employed in federal government agencies, while others were lawyers or members of the other professions. They came from all walks of life and displayed a variety of economic interests.

The records of these conventions indicate that the Negroes present were for the most part men of moderation. They were neither economic nor social revolutionaries, nor did they attempt a drastic revision of racial relations in the South. They supported efforts to remove electoral disabilities from whites – including the ex-Confederates – as well as Negroes. Vilified by conservative white Southerners and scorned by historians ever since, the "carpetbaggers," "scalawags," and Negroes who wrote the state constitutions in 1867 and 1868 produced the most progressive organic laws the South had ever known. They abolished slavery, race distinctions in the ownership and inheritance of property, and property qualifications for voting and holding office. They promulgated virtually universal manhood suffrage, established the public school systems, and made provisions for more efficient local government. When the ex-Confederates regained power at the end of Reconstruction, they retained many of the provisions they had condemned a decade before, rewriting only those clauses that had enfranchised the Negro.

The new constitutions enabled Negroes to hold office in the governments that were subsequently organized. Historians have traditionally described the ensuing period as one of "Black Reconstruction" or "Negro rule," characterized by gross misgovernment under graft-ridden legislatures composed mainly of Negroes. Actually, none of the state governments was ever, for any time, under Negro control. While Negroes predominated in the lower house of the South Carolina legislature until 1874, whites always controlled the state senate; two Negroes served the state as lieutenant governors, but the governor was always white. In the other states there were never sufficient numbers of Negroes in the government for freedmen to control public affairs or secure positions of power. Only when Negro legislators held the balance between militant factions could they determine policy, and this rarely occurred. Negroes were occasionally elected to such state offices as lieutenant governor, secretary of state, treasurer, or superintendent of public education – positions involving more responsibility than power – but the "horrors of Negro domination" from which white Southerners sought deliverance simply did not exist.

There was, of course, considerable corruption within the Southern state legislatures during Radical Reconstruction, just as there was, for example, in Washington among Congressmen and in New York under the Tweed Ring. Public immorality and political depravity were nationwide during the Reconstruction years, and stemmed from forces not to be ascribed to a particular group, section, or time. A survey of the debt incurred by the legislatures during the period of so-called "Negro rule" clearly reveals that these bodies were much more extravagent in granting subsidies, contracts, and favorable legislation to Northern-owned railroads, canal companies, and other enterprises than in providing whiskey, cigars, and travel expenses for their members. Moreover, much of the debt is attributable to the costs of operating legitimate programs of public improvements, education, and social services. "Of all those who participated in the work of Radical reconstruction," John D. Hicks concludes, "the Negroes were the least to blame for its excesses."

However crudely the "carpetbaggers," "scalawags," and freedmen ruled, their ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment helped to give the nation its first clear definition of citizenship and corporations an opportunity to flourish. In ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment they made possible the removal of racial disabilities from voting. They also brought a new measure of democracy to the South. Black Codes were abrogated, underprivileged classes were given a voice in political affairs, and policies were inaugurated to better the lot of the common man: free public education, progressive tax rates, poor relief, and improved public facilities. Poor whites and Negroes had been given a taste of democracy that would never be forgotten, even during the darker days ahead.

Betwen 1869 and 1880, fourteen Negroes served in the United States House of Representatives and two in the Senate. The two Senators — Hiram R. Revels and Blanche K. Bruce — were from Mississippi. Revels, a free Negro, had been educated at an Ohio seminary and at Knox College in Illinois. Before the Civil War he was ordained a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. During the conflict he recruited Negroes for the Union army, founded a school for freedmen, and joined the army as chaplain of a Negro regiment in Mississippi. He entered politics after the war and in 1870-71 filled the Senate seat vacated by Jefferson Davis. In the Senate, Revels promoted his state's interests and favored the removal of disqualifications on ex-Confederates.

Blanche K. Bruce entered the Senate in 1875 and served a full term. Born a slave in Virginia, he later escaped to Missouri where he began a school for Negroes. After studying in the North, he went to Mississippi, entered politics, and held various offices including that of superintendent of schools. In the Senate, Bruce introduced pension bills, some of which were passed. But his major work was with the committees to which he had been assigned. As chairman of a select committee, he conducted a thorough investigation of the failure of the Freedmen's Savings Bank. Chartered by Congress in 1865 as a savings institution for Negroes, the bank failed in 1874 after Jay Cooke and Company had dumped a considerable amount of undesirable commercial paper on it. Bruce introduced a bill to reimburse the thousands of depositors who had suffered losses they could ill-afford.

Most of the fourteen Negroes who served in the lower House during these years had been active in state and local political affairs; among these were Alonzo Ransier of South Carolina, John R. Lynch of Mississippi, and James T. Rapier of Alabama. Some were war heroes, like Robert Smalls of South Carolina who had seized the Confederate ship "Planter" and delivered it to Union authorities. While chiefly concerned with promoting civil rights and education, they represented their constituents in the usual ways and supported efforts to improve rivers and harbors, encourage manufacturing, provide relief for Indians, and promote intersectional peace. Few of their bills were considered by Congress — the usual fate of most bills then and since — and their efforts were hampered by the reluctance of their colleagues, even those in their own party, to accord them respect. James G. Blaine, however, described them as "studious, earnest, ambitious men, whose public conduct . . . would be honorable to any race." When it became known that members of Congress were connected with some of the scandals and corrupt deals of the times, Roger A. Pryor, a former Congressman and an ex-Confederate officer, paid the Negro legislators unexpected tribute. "We have not yet heard," he said, "that a Negro Congressman was in any way implicated in the Crédit Mobilier scandal."

The Negroes who attained political prominence during Radical Reconstruction — as convention delegates, state legislators, government officials, and members of Congress — did so largely because the Republicans regarded them and their people as vital to the party's future success. Rejected by the Southern wing of the Democratic party, enfranchised freedmen, the largest group of voters during Radical Reconstruction, became important to the Republicans who were determined to strengthen their position in the South and perpetuate their power in national politics. To recruit Republican voters, particularly among Negroes, the Union League of America was revitalized and expanded by the Radicals. A private organization founded during the Civil War, the League provided a variety of social services to its members and catechized them on the evils of the Democratic party — the party, Republicans charged, of traitors and slaveowners. Throughout Reconstruction, the Union League and other smaller organizations delivered to the Republicans the votes of Negroes in national, state, and local elections, and thus earned for themselves the enmity of white Southern Democrats.

THE OVERTHROW OF THE RADICALS: THE END OF RECONSTRUCTION

The post-war struggle between Republicans and Democrats to dominate national politics led both parties to resort to extreme devices in the South. To be sure, the Union League, the Freedmen's Bureau, the Union troops stationed in the South — indeed, the Radical assumption of control over Reconstruction — represented efforts to ensure the fruits of victory to the nation, but they also were used to promote the growth of the Republican party. When Republicans threatened to end white control over the Negro and destroy the Southern wing of the Democratic party in the process, the ex-Confederates struck back in fury. Thus, both parties must share the blame for the period of violence that followed, and for the ultimate failure of Reconstruction to establish intersectional and interracial peace.

The principal instruments of the ex-Confederate counterattack were the violent secret societies which flourished after 1867. The Knights of the White Camelia and the Ku Klux Klan were the best known of these organizations. Designed to restore political control to the whites by "keeping the Negroes in their place" and frightening the "carpetbaggers" and "scalawags," they used every form of intimidation and torture to accomplish their purpose. They soon got out of hand. Although moderate white Southerners withdrew their support from the societies, they were unable to stop the reign of terror and brutality that struck the South. When state laws to end the violence proved ineffective, Congress passed a series of acts in 1870 and 1871 to suppress the organizations and enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. As a result, hundreds of arrests were made and the societies were subdued for a time.

Reconstruction drew gradually to an end as white Southerners began to resume their places and enter public affairs. Many had done so early in 1865 by taking the oath of allegiance. The process continued even under Radical Reconstruction through legislative enfranchisement, individual acts of pardon, or oath-taking. In 1871 the "ironclad oath," which had been imposed by Congress at the beginning of Radical Reconstruction to disqualify ex-Confederates, was repealed. The next year a general act of amnesty was passed by Congress. It removed disabilities from all but 500 prominent ex-Confederate officials. The result of these acts was the revival of the Democratic party and the return of home rule to the South. Conservative Democrats controlled Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee by the end of 1870; they won Texas in 1873, Alabama and Arkansas in 1874, and Mississippi in 1875. By 1876 all but three of the eleven ex-Confederate states were in the hands of the Democrats, and the next year the Radicals were ousted from the remaining three. As Democrats returned to power, new organizations were formed to promote white supremacy, while riots and other methods of intimidation were employed to keep Negroes from the polls.

Just as nationwide forces had created the problems of the Reconstruction Era, nationwide forces were bringing the era to an end. Northerners had grown weary of Reconstruction and were losing interest in the problems of the South; many were beginning to conclude that no method would force Southern acceptance of Northern ideas and practices. The deaths of Thaddeus Stevens in 1868 and Charles Sumner in 1874 weakened the Radical strength in Congress, and the new Republican leadership was less concerned with humanitarian problems than with industrial progress. The Republican party, already discredited by the impeachment of Johnson, lost further popular support as the Grant scandals became known, and the Democrats made political capital by terming it the party of "corruption." Southern Democrats were asserting that they alone could guide the freedmen, just as they had the slaves, and they were finding sympathetic ears in the North. Even the Supreme Court took a hand in hastening the overthrow of Radical Reconstruction. Sections of the Enforcement Act of 1870, which had been enacted by Congress to suppress the secret societies, were declared unconstitutional in 1876. That same year, in *United States v. Cruikshank*, the Court held that while the Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed citizens the right not to be discriminated against by the states on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude, it did not guarantee the right to vote.

The election of 1876 was the final test for Reconstruction. In the campaign for the presidency, the Democrats committed themselves to end Reconstruction in the South, while a substantial number of moderate Republicans supported the removal of all federal troops. After Rutherford B. Hayes, the Republican candidate, won the disputed electoral votes of Oregon and three Southern states, and thus became President, he alleviated Southern grief by promptly withdrawing the troops. Thus ended Reconstruction. The South, freed at last from Northern interference and Negro influence, could proceed to rule itself. For white Southerners the peace had been won; for Negroes, it had ended.

Chapter 7

THE NADIR: 1877-1901

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the final betrayal of the aims of the Civil War and Reconstruction as these applied to the Negro. During the twenty-four years that followed the Compromise of 1877 – styled the "Redemption" by Southerners – Negroes were disfranchised, the civil rights guarantees of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were repudiated and new patterns of segregation were established. Despite the progress Negroes made after Reconstruction – in education, in social and cultural endeavors, and even in the economic sphere – the close of the century found them a caste apart. Their status was confirmed by the contempt in which they were held, by the exploitation and "Jim Crow" laws under which they lived, and by the countless acts of violence that were perpetrated upon them. Rayford W. Logan, a distinguished historian of the American Negro, calls this era the "Nadir" of the Negro's history, and for good reason. By 1901, a new move toward freedom had begun but it was scarcely perceptible from the depths in which almost nine million Negro Americans then found themselves.

DISFRANCHISEMENT

The gradual loss of voting rights marked the descent to the Nadir. Once home rule was restored, Southern Democrats began a deliberate effort to remove the Negro from politics by denying him the ballot. Since the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments precluded outright disfranchisement, the New South's leaders were compelled to use a variety of ingenious methods – extra-legal and legal – to achieve the same effect. Violence and intimidation, successfully tested during Confederate Reconstruction and the period of Radical rule, were again employed to keep Negroes from the polls. Polling places were located far from areas in which Negroes lived or were moved without prior notice to Negro voters. Road blocks and ferry "breakdowns," oddly frequent on election days, seldom delayed Red Shirts, night riders, or white voters, but they prevented many Negroes from voting. Negroes who managed to gain access to the polls often had their ballots nullified by overzealous registrars or by overstuffed ballot boxes. In some instances, Negro votes were solicited by white candidates skilled in making attractive but irredeemable pledges or by Negroes deliberately nominated to divide the vote of their race.

Southern state legislatures adopted numerous devices after 1877 to further the movement toward disfranchisement. Poll taxes reduced the number of poor white and Negro voters while gerrymandering – the combining of Negro and white areas so as to secure a majority of white voters – curtailed the number of Negroes nominated or elected to office. Complicated voting procedures, highly centralized election codes, and long lists of voting disqualifications made further inroads on Negro suffrage. Abetted by fraudulence, terror, and intimidation, these legislative enactments reduced the Negro vote as a factor in Southern politics. As Henry W. Grady, a leading spokesman of the New South, observed in 1889, "The Negro as a political force has dropped out of serious consideration."

The move toward disfranchisement was countenanced by both major political parties. While the Negroes' loss of voting rights was the direct consequence of actions taken by the Southern wing of the Democratic party, the national Democratic administrations of Cleveland and the Republican administrations of Garfield, Arthur, Harrison, and McKinley continued the hands-off policy of the Hayes years. "The Republican party," charged T. Thomas Fortune, editor of the *New York Globe*, "has eliminated the colored man from politics." This fiery journalist joined with other Negro leaders, including the Republican Frederick Douglass, in condemning the Republican party's complacency and indifference. Individual Northern Democrats and Republicans publicly lamented the loss of the Negro's constitutional rights throughout this period but their parties' national leaders, unable or unwilling to take action, failed to halt the loss. Some observers, in fact, ascribe the success of the disfranchisement movement to the apathy shown by successive federal administrations in resolving the "Negro Question."

Having denied many Negroes the prime requisite of political power, it became easier for white Southerners to place additional handicaps upon them and to curtail their economic and social opportunities. Negro disfranchisement, moreover, proved to be as disastrous to the whites as to the Negroes. It fostered one-party government in the South and ensured the dominance of the Bourbon aristocracy in Democratic party politics. Representative government for all classes of white Southerners became more difficult to achieve as the New South became the Solid South and as large numbers of poor whites were removed from the suffrage along with the Negroes. The consequent stratification of white society laid the groundwork for the bitter class conflicts of the Populist era.

THE AGRARIAN CRUSADE AND THE POPULIST MOVEMENT

White Southerners of different classes had united in their efforts to disfranchise the Negro. White solidarity, however, proved more difficult to maintain once the Negro was out of politics and it disintegrated as divergent economic and political interests intensified after 1880. The Agrarian Crusade and the Populist movement superimposed themselves upon the race question of the South and, for a brief period, economic considerations allied poor whites and Negroes in a common cause. In the struggles that ensued, the Negro found renewed hope for political power and freedom.

Agricultural depression and discontent were national phenomena after 1870. Overproduction and falling prices made the last quarter of the nineteenth century a time of serious trouble for the American farmer. As farm indebtedness and foreclosures increased, many small farmers became convinced that prompt government action alone would bring them relief. Currency deflation, monopolies, government-supported railroads, corporations protected by tariffs and low tax rates – these they held responsible for their plight. To secure laws that would regulate railroads, industries, and other economic activities – and thereby raise farm income – national farm groups were organized and farmers became increasingly active in party politics.

Agrarian unrest was particularly acute in the South. The National Grange in the 1870's and the Southern Farmers' Alliance in the 1880's attracted many poor white farmers throughout the region. Although these organizations excluded Negro farmers from membership, they encouraged them to set up similar groups of their own. The Colored Farmers' Alliance and Cooperative Union was thus founded in 1886, and it soon enrolled one million Negro farmers. During its early years it worked closely with the white farm groups to solve problems of mutual concern.

The Populist party became the political agency of these radical farmers' alliances. In the South, white Populist leaders actively sought to convert Negroes to their cause. As one observed, "They are in the ditch just like we are." The Populists advocated political if not social equality for the Negro. According to C. Vann Woodward, they preached "an equalitarianism of want and poverty, the kinship of a common grievance and a common oppressor." During the presidential campaign of 1892, Populists actively sought the franchise for Negroes and the Negro vote for themselves. Tom Watson, a Georgia radical and the leading Southern Populist, spoke out against lynching and race prejudice while other Populists went further in the direction of racial intergration than did the remnants of the Republican party. Negroes entered the innermost councils of the Populist party and were appointed or elected to important political positions in several Southern states. Under radical leadership, the white masses of the South were learning to regard the Negro as a political ally bound to them by common needs and aspirations.

The Bourbon leadership of the Democratic party – well-to-do planters, merchants, and industrialists – bore the brunt of the Populist attack and, as the attack mounted, white solidarity was genuinely threatened. The Populist movement, regarded as revolutionary by the conservative forces, caused a revolution in Democratic strategy. Alarmed by the appeal of Populism, the Democrats turned to the Negroes and began courting the vote of the very same people they had earlier sought to disfranchise. The courtship proved fruitless, however, and the Democrats began using forceful means to secure the Negro vote. When it became clear that their efforts would fail, they vindictively resolved to complete Negro disfranchisement and remove the Negro permanently from politics.

The Populist struggles in the South had drawn Negroes and whites closer together than they had ever been before. The coalition to oust the Bourbons from power had subordinated the "Negro Question" to broader economic, social, and political issues and had given the South a genuine opportunity for progress. The collapse of the agrarian revolt in 1896 brought the opportunity to an end. There followed a reversion to the older ways – ways which had obscured fundamental social ills and had kept both races in poverty. White Southerners again became preoccupied with the race question, seeing in its solution their only road to salvation. Few doubted their ability to solve it.

The Racist Triumph

The political conflicts of the Agrarian Crusade aroused widespread fears among Southerners that competing white factions would give Negroes the balance of power in politics. As Populist fervor diminished during the 1890's, the Southern Democrats renewed their efforts to exclude Negroes from the polls. Beginning with Mississippi in 1890, a series of state constitutional conventions were held to complete the work of disfranchisement. Still hampered by the "race, color, or previous condition of servitude" clause of the Fifteenth Amendment, the ex-Confederate states incorporated into their revised constitutions many of the devices that had earlier proven successful. Several states adopted poll taxes and literacy tests calculated to keep large numbers of impoverished, ill-educated Negroes from the polls. In some states, property qualifications and lengthy residence requirements for voting were established and provisions were made to exclude voters convicted of minor offenses. The state-wide Democratic primary, adopted in thirteen Southern states between 1896 and 1915, did much to democratize nominations and party control but it excluded the Negro and converted the Democratic party into a "white man's club." Since the party was the government in the South, the Negro's exclusion from the primary may be regarded as another form of disfranchisement.

When it became apparent that constitutional provisions for poll taxes and literacy tests barred numerous whites as well as Negroes from the polls, attempts were made to rectify the situation. Beginning with Louisiana in 1898, several states inserted "grandfather clauses" into their constitutions. These clauses added to the permanent registration lists all males whose fathers or grandfathers were qualified to vote on January 1, 1867 – a time when no Negro could vote. Since voters enrolled under the "grandfather clause" were exempt from poll tax and literacy test provisions, the device permitted many poor whites to vote. Although the Supreme Court declared the "grandfather clause" unconstitutional in 1915, the measure effectively reduced the ratio of Negro to white voters during its period of enforcement.

By 1910, constitutional provisions had disfranchised almost all the Negroes in eight Southern states. The success of the movement may be seen in a comparison of registration figures for Negroes in Louisiana. In 1896, 130,334 Negroes were registered to vote. In 1900, after the new constitution was adopted, there were 5,320 registered Negroes; in 1904, only 1,342 were enrolled. None of the Louisiana parishes had a majority of Negro voters by 1900 although Negro voters had predominated in twenty-six parishes four years before.

Negroes gradually began to meet even the most stringent qualifications for voting. To keep them from the polls, Southerners became skillful manipulators of the suffrage laws. The new constitutional provisions lent themselves to a remarkable degree of administrative flexibility. White officials became so adept at interpreting the codes that even the most prominent members of the Negro community – among them educators, ministers and successful businessmen – were excluded from the ballot.

As the nineteenth century ended, the twin ideologies of white supremacy and Negro inferiority emerged triumphant in the South. With political power stripped from the Negro, it became easier to establish complete white control and to justify that control in terms of inherent dissimilarities presumed to exist between the races. An intensive propaganda of Negrophobia, race chauvinism, and white supremacy prepared the South, if not the nation, for constitutional disfranchisement. It was then used to support the revival of segregation laws—laws which for the most part had been abrogated under the Radicals by 1868. While segregation and ostracism were practiced throughout the South in the 1870's and 1880's, it was without the harshness and rigidity that characterized their observance during the 1890's and thereafter. Before the Compromise of 1877, segregation had taken place in the Protestant churches, in the schools, and in the military service but, until the 1890's, there was little disposition among Southerners to expand into new areas.

Led by such racists as J. K. Vardaman and Ben Tillman and encouraged by disappointed Populist leaders like Tom Watson, the Conservatives rapidly enacted "Jim Crow" laws throughout the South. Transportation facilities were segregated and, after the Civil Rights Act of 1875 was nullified by the Supreme Court in 1883, Negroes were banned from places of public accommodation. The "separate but equal" doctrine set forth by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 upheld segregation in transportation and education and, by extension, in other areas in which states chose to act. "If one race be inferior to the other socially," the majority ruled in this case, "the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane . . . ."

A number of authorities maintain that, in legislating and confirming "Jim Crow" statutes, the Southern states and the Supreme Court actually encouraged further reductions in Negro freedom, new acts of violence against Negroes, and increased lawlessness among whites. Gunnar Myrdal, for example, points out that "the Jim Crow statutes were effective means of tightening and freezing—in many cases instigating—segregation and discrimination." In *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, C. Vann Woodward thus describes the impact of the segregation laws on the white community:

> The Jim Crow laws put the authority of the state or city in the voice of the street-car conductor, the railway brakeman, the bus driver, the theater usher, and also into the voice of the hoodlum of the public park and playgrounds. They gave free rein and the majesty of the law to mass aggressions that might otherwise have been curbed, blunted, or deflected.

The crime statistics for this period support Woodward's contention. Lynchings in the South increased between 1882 and 1890 and then rose sharply in the early 1890's when constitutional provisions were used to legalize the Negro's subordinate status. Over 3,000 Negroes were lynched between 1882 and 1900; 214 lynchings took place during the first two years of the twentieth century.

The ideology of white supremacy exacted a high price from the white community. In hastening the demise of the two-party system, it curtailed open discussion of major issues and public interest in political affairs. It gave demagogues an attractive campaign theme and an inordinate amount of political control. It required the duplication of public facilities, diverting energy and funds from many needed enterprises. As the ideology intensified in the South, it spread northward and westward, further separating Negroes from the mainstream of American life. The last decades of the nineteenth century proved to be a Nadir, not only for the Negro, but also for the American democracy in which he sought a share.

EDUCATIONAL GAINS DURING THE POST-RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD

The racist ideology subordinated Negroes to the whites in Southern politics and in economic and social affairs but it failed to deter their progress in education. The Negro schools and colleges that were founded during Reconstruction continued to flourish after 1877. White Southerners displayed less hostility toward schools than other institutions used by Negroes to improve their status; consequently, educational pursuits became increasingly important within the Negro community during the Nadir period.

The failure of the Southern states to give equitable financial support to Negro schools after the educational program of the Freedmen's Bureau was terminated in 1870 made Negro education dependent upon denominational support and Northern philanthropy. Several large educational foundations were established between the Civil War and World War I to aid Negro education in the South. The Peabody Education Fund, the John F. Slater Fund, the General Education Board, the Anna T. Jeanes Fund, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, and the Phelps-Stokes Fund were the most prominent among them. These foundations helped to establish colleges and train Negro teachers; they gave financial assistance to public school systems and worked to improve industrial and vocational education. Although educational facilities for Negroes remained inferior to those provided for white children, the assistance given by the philanthropic funds did much to stimulate educational progress within the Southern Negro community.

Substantial support for education came from Negroes themselves. According to one estimate, Negroes paid a total of $70,000,000 in direct and indirect taxes for educational purposes between 1870 and 1899 while an additional $15,000,000 were spent on tuition and fees to private educational institutions. To supplement their incomes, Negro schools engaged in a number of fund-raising activities. For example, the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University toured the eastern United States and Europe to raise funds for their school.

Substantial gains were made in education by 1900. That year, there were almost 29,000 Negro teachers and more than 1,500,000 Negro children attending school. Northern colleges and universities were opening their doors to Negro applicants, and thirty-four Negro institutions of higher learning were preparing a new generation of scholars and professionals for leadership within the Negro community. Here the foundation was being laid for a new move toward freedom.

Booker T. Washington and His Policies

On September 18, 1895, at a time when the capitulation to racism was almost complete in the South, an unusual event took place at the Cotton States' Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. For the first time that anyone could recall, a Negro had been invited to share a speaker's platform with a number of eminent whites. Introduced by a former governor of Georgia, Booker T. Washington was warmly greeted by the Negroes in the audience but received only scattered applause from the whites. When the president of Tuskegee Institute had concluded his address, the applause was loud and general. In violation of Southern custom, the whites on the platform rushed to shake his hand. The speech was widely publicized in the nation's press and brought Washington a flood of congratulatory telegrams and letters, numerous proposals for lecture tours, an enthusiastic message of thanks from President Cleveland, and an honorary Harvard degree. Frederick Douglass's death earlier that year left Washington the principal spokesman for the Negro community but the Atlanta address propelled him into national prominence. Until his own death twenty years later, Booker T. Washington was the dominant and quite possibly the most controversial figure among America's Negroes.

Born in slavery in 1856, Washington became a student and a probationary janitor at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute when he was barely sixteen years old. There he fell under the influence of General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, an advocate of practical education who viewed labor as a spiritual force capable of building human character and dignity. As a result, Washington became convinced that the ultimate success of his people depended upon their ability to perform useful services for which markets existed.

When Washington went to Tuskegee in 1881, he encountered considerable local hostility toward his school. Washington assured the townspeople that his students would observe Southern traditions and be of service to them. Antagonism receded as the institution began to supply the community with needed goods and services. The success of Tuskegee in ameliorating white opposition and in attracting Northern philanthropic support strengthened Washington's views that Negroes with vocations and skills would further the interests of the South and win for the race the good will of the ruling class. Skilled Negro workmen and businessmen, Washington reasoned, would make themselves economically indispensable to the whites and their civil rights would follow as an inevitable consequence.

Washington's Atlanta speech summarized his educational philosophy and related it to the broader question of race relations in the South. Calling upon Negroes to "cast down your buckets where you are," Washington expressed disdain for political activity or migration as methods for improving the Negroes' status. Negroes, he claimed, would prosper only by devoting themselves to "agriculture, mechanics, commerce, domestic service, and the professions;" the struggle for prosperity would ultimately bring them their lawful privileges as citizens. Turning to the whites in his audience, the educator held out the hand of conciliation and frankly accepted the system of segregation. He gave them assurances of his race's loyalty and devotion and, in an oft-quoted statement, he indicated his acquiescence to the South's social code: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." He went on to explain his position:

> The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercise of those privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in the opera house.

Washington's advocacy of vocational education, as well as his apparent lack of interest in the struggle for political and civil rights, was hailed by most whites. Strife-weary Northerners saw in it a formula for interracial peace; Northern industrialists believed it would stimulate further economic development within the South; racists in the North and South thought it would lead Negroes to their proper "place" in American society; segregationists found in it a means of maintaining the Negro's inferior status. Few whites, however, were able to distinguish between the immediate and long-range goals Washington set for his people. His proposals were tailored to the times, but his fundamental objective was the complete acceptance and integration of Negroes in American life. As Washington said on one occasion, "I plead for industrial education and development for the Negro not because I want to cramp him, but because I want to free him." Washington had proposed his policies as stepping stones to a just solution of the race question; for most whites, however, they became the end rather than the means.

Although the vast majority of Negroes acclaimed Washington as their leader, some vigorously opposed his educational philosophy and his methods for solving the racial question. W.E.B. DuBois was foremost among his critics. The first Negro to receive a doctorate in philosophy from Harvard University (1895), DuBois was professor of history and economics at Atlanta University from 1896 to 1910. In a series of books, essays, and speeches he attacked Washington's vocational education program as too narrow in scope and too materialistic in objective. He denounced Washington's deprecation of liberal arts education for Negroes and accused the Tuskegee educator of preaching a "gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to overshadow the higher aims of life." Describing Washington's Atlanta speech as the "Atlanta Compromise," DuBois held such conciliatory views as Washington's responsible for the intensification of racism that occurred in the South after 1895. He found fault with Washington's assessment of the labor needs of modern industrial society and feared that submissiveness to the ideology of white supremacy would in the long run perpetuate the Negro's inferior status.

Despite their attacks upon Washington's doctrines, his critics (including DuBois) admitted the importance of many of his teachings. Washington's biographers have detected weaknesses in his proposals – weaknesses which may have been less obvious during his own lifetime than today – but there is general agreement among them that his career was devoted to the improvement of Negro life in America.

As Washington's prestige grew after 1895, he became one of the most powerful Negroes in the nation. He was consulted by national political leaders on all questions affecting the Negro and he exercised tremendous influence over the dispensation of the Republican party's patronage in the South. His personality so dominated Negro history during his lifetime that historians have called the years from 1890 to 1915 "The Age of Booker T. Washington."

ECONOMIC STRUGGLES

After Reconstruction, the majority of Negroes in the United States continued to live in the South. Engaged primarily in agriculture, they encountered tremendous difficulty in earning their livelihoods. Most Negro farmers lacked the capital resources needed to buy land; those few who managed to accumulate sufficient savings found desirable farm properties unavailable for sale to them. The number and average acreage of Negro-owned farms remained relatively small throughout this period; by 1890, some 120,000 farms were owned by Negroes. Agricultural depressions, crop failures, the evils of farm tenancy and sharecropping, and a deteriorating social status made farm life increasingly unattractive to many Negroes. As a result, a migration began from the rural to the urban South and to rural and urban areas in the North and West. In 1879, an estimated 40,000 Negroes left for Kansas under the leadership of Henry Adams of Louisiana and Benjamin "Pap" Singleton of Tennessee and, shortly thereafter, thousands more migrated to Iowa and Nebraska. Although the "Exodusters" of 1879 and their successors faced privation and ostracism, many remained in the new settlements and some prospered.

Agents attempting to promote Negro migration met with considerable hostility throughout the South. Most white Southerners opposed the movement since they feared for their labor supply and low wage rates. At their urging, the Southern state legislatures adopted a variety of statutes designed to restrain the agents and stem the Negro exodus.

Negro leaders were divided over the desirability of migration. Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington opposed the movement since they believed it offered no permanent solution to the Negroes' problems. They feared migration would foster nomadism and preferred for Negroes a sedentary existence in the South to the risks of life elsewhere. But Richard T. Greener, the first Negro graduate of Harvard University and a former professor at the University of South Carolina, felt that migration would bring Negroes new opportunities and would improve the lot of those who remained behind. Economic considerations rather than words probably decided the question for most Negroes. Not many could afford the costs involved in moving their families. Those who took part in the exodus did so for the same reasons that compelled other Americans to abandon rural life during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The attractions of the city and the opportunities afforded by a growing industrial order were too tempting to resist.

Although urban life was almost as frustrating as rural life during the Nadir period, Negroes were nevertheless able to make noteworthy contributions to the nation's industrial transformation. Jan E. Matzeliger, born in Dutch Guiana, served as an apprentice cobbler in Philadelphia and later found employment in a Lynn, Massachusetts, shoe factory. Here he invented the shoe laster which reduced the industry's manufacturing costs by more than 50 per cent. Elijah McCoy, born in Canada to runaway Kentucky slaves, secured his first patent for an automatic machine lubricator in 1872; between 1881 and 1925 he obtained forty-four additional patents for similar devices. In 1884, John P. Parker invented a screw for tobacco presses. He later organized the Ripley Foundry and Machine Company and manufactured presses for many businesses. Granville T. Woods obtained some 150 patents for inventions chiefly in the fields of air brakes and electrical equipment. Most of his patents were sold to such firms as General Electric, Westinghouse Air Brake, and American Telephone and Telegraph.

It was more difficult for Negroes to join unions than to have their inventions accepted by the captains of industry. During the final decades of the century labor unions began to increase their influence within the industrial order. Union membership gave more and more urban workers an effective means of improving their lot but most Negroes were excluded from membership. Prejudice kept large numbers of Negroes outside the ranks of organized labor; in addition, Negro workers generally lacked the skills required for membership in the craft unions. The widespread belief that Negroes were naturally unfit for factory work or for training as skilled employees made it difficult for them to secure positions in manufacturing and some trades and consequently kept them out of the unions. While the Negro population became increasingly urbanized after 1880, few Negroes were to benefit economically or socially from the organized labor movement of these years.

The Knights of Labor was the only national labor organization during the Nadir period that actively sought Negro members. In 1885, its national convention adopted a resolution that Negro organizers be appointed in each of the Southern states. Although the proposal was never implemented, some 60,000 Negroes were enrolled as members by 1886. The American Federation of Labor, an organization of autonomous craft unions, came into prominence as the Knights of Labor declined after 1886. During its early years it took a positive stand against discrimination. When a group of independent unions declined to join the American Federation of Labor because of its position on the race question, the organization began to revise its policies. In 1900 it permitted the affiliation of unions which did not constitutionally exclude Negroes but which traditionally pledged only white workers for membership. Thereafter, each local was permitted to determine its own racial policies. Though the American Federation of Labor chartered a few Negro locals and though efforts were made to establish independent Negro unions, relatively few Negro workers were organized by 1901. Barred from union membership, they were compelled to accept lower wages than organized, or even unorganized, white workers.

Before the end of the century a movement was launched to increase the participation of Negroes in business and manufacturing. Such leaders as John Hope, a professor at Atlanta University, began urging Negroes to escape from competition with the white working class by becoming their own employers. In 1900, Booker T. Washington organized the National Negro Business League to stimulate business enterprise and to provide Negro businessmen with opportunities for the exchange of ideas. By 1907 the League had over 300 branches and was a flourishing institution.

As the century ended Negroes were engaged in many businesses and some Negro businessmen had even acquired considerable wealth. Nevertheless, the Negro community remained essentially a community of workers. Some economic progress had been made during the first thirty-five years of freedom, but by 1900 the vast majority of Negroes still lived in abject poverty.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROGRESS

Negroes found themselves increasingly isolated from the world of the whites as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Barred from politics, frustrated in their economic pursuits, and compelled to maintain a separate existence, they came to rely more and more on their own agencies and institutions for group cohesion and survival. The church continued to be an important social institution within the Negro community, rendering innumerable educational, cultural, and recreational services to its members. A number of fraternal orders, benevolent associations, and insurance societies provided Negroes with needed services and opportunities for social contacts. Despite difficulties in raising funds, charitable and philanthropic organizations established and maintained orphanages, hospitals, and sanitariums. The National Association of Colored Women, founded in 1895, helped to support several of these institutions. Such organizations as the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association expanded their programs for Negro boys and girls.

Negroes continued to search for solutions to their problems. Conferences and conventions were held to discuss social and economic problems confronting the Negro community. The annual Farmers' Conference at Tuskegee and the meetings of the National Negro Business League sought to promote economic progress and provided forums for the exchange of ideas. Perhaps the most important meetings held by Negroes were the annual Conferences on Negro Problems conducted at Atlanta University between 1896 and 1914. Under the general direction of W.E.B. DuBois, the Conferences produced a series of research reports on various aspects of Negro life which are still highly regarded by contemporary scholars.

The emergence of a new group of Negro intellectuals toward the end of this period was an auspicious portent for the future. Improved educational opportunities and social and cultural growth brought into prominence a number of scholars and writers, thus insuring for Negroes another generation of heroes and leaders. W.E.B. DuBois, regarded as the most brilliant of the scholars, was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts in 1862. He studied at Fisk, Harvard, and the University of Berlin. DuBois' *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade, 1638-1870* was published in 1896 as the first work in the Harvard Historical Studies. Hailed as a landmark in the growth of Negro scholarship, it established DuBois' reputation as a scientific historian. The publication of *The Philadelphia Negro* in 1899 brought him additional recognition as a sociologist. By the turn of the century, according to Rayford W. Logan, DuBois "established beyond reasonable doubt the capacity of a trained Negro to compete on equal terms with other Americans in the realm of scholarship."

Biographical and historical writings, popular literary fare in America during the Nadir period, were especially prized by Negroes. Accounts of heroic deeds and successes of prominent Negroes undoubtedly gave Negro readers a measure of faith in themselves and some respite from the oppressions of the times. The autobiographies of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Henry Ossian Flipper, Bishop Daniel A. Payne, and John M. Langston were widely read during and following the period as were the biographical and historical writings of Sarah Bradford, Joseph T. Wilson, and George Washington Williams.

William Wells Brown and Charles W. Chesnutt were the most prominent authors of fiction. Brown was born in slavery in Kentucky. His autobiography, published in 1847 by the Massachusetts Antislavery Society, is one of the most readable and exciting narratives of slave life. Although Brown composed music and wrote several biographies and histories, he is best known for his fiction. The publication of *My Southern Home* in 1880 marked the end of a long literary career devoted largely to the portrayal of life in the South. Charles W. Chesnutt gained fame as a writer with the publication of a short story, "The Gophered Grapevine," in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1887. The most famous of his books, *The Conjure Woman*, appeared two years later and won considerable critical acclaim for its characterizations, lively narrative, and realistic handling of social themes. For two decades thereafter, Chesnutt was the most widely read Negro novelist in America.

Paul Laurence Dunbar ranks as the best known Negro poet of the period. *Oak and Ivy* (1893), *Majors and Minors* (1896), and *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (1897) were his most popular works. Dunbar wrote classic English verse but is best known for his dialect poems. Described by William Dean Howells as the first Negro poet "to feel the Negro life esthetically and express it lyrically," Dunbar attempted to portray rural Negroes as real human beings. While Dunbar has been criticized for romanticizing rural Negro life (he never had any firsthand contact with slavery or with the deep South), the sociologist E. Franklin Frazier nevertheless described his verse as "a repository of the colorful and poetic language of the Negro folk." Dunbar was only thirty-four years old when he died in 1906, but he had already won tremendous popular acclaim and a secure place in the history of American literature.

NEGROES AND THE WAR WITH SPAIN

The barriers which denied Negroes many of the benefits of American life did not diminish either their faith in the American dream or their devotion to their native land. The outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898 found Negroes eager to fight for their country. The African ancestry of many Cubans and the Cuban struggle for freedom and independence had engaged the sympathies of American Negroes, while the loss of twenty-two Negroes aboard the *Maine* had aroused their indignation against Spain. In the war that ensued, as in earlier wars, Negroes fought courageously and died valiantly. The praise accorded Negro soldiers at El Caney, at Las Guasimas, and especially at San Juan Hill, gave Negroes at home a renewed sense of pride that eased somewhat the accumulated burdens of the Nadir period.

The Spanish-American War initiated for the United States an era of empire-building that ultimately brought under American control or influence millions of non-whites living in Latin America and on the islands of the Caribbean and the Pacific. It was almost inevitable that America's racial dilemma would muddy the waters of her overseas empire. Unlike the other major imperial powers, the United States had a race problem at home while governing an empire with substantial numbers of darker peoples. Racism and cultural chauvinism were thus to complicate the tasks America set for herself in extending her civilization beyond her borders.

Throughout the nineteenth century the American democracy had encountered serious difficulty in assimilating people of other than Anglo-Saxon origin; it had, for example, excluded Asians, enclaved its Indian population, and ostracized millions of citizens of African descent. During the twentieth century the race question was to continue to challenge America at home and abroad and to become a major issue confronting the American democracy in world affairs.

Chapter 8

IN SEARCH OF A PROMISED LAND: 1901-1933

The new century dawned on a strong, prosperous, and confident America. The industrial progress that had brought increased productivity and improved living standards was changing the patterns of American life. Although mechanization, urbanization, and rapid business expansion were creating problems for the American people, these were generally regarded as natural consequences of growth rather than as symptoms of social disorder. Absorbed with the materialistic concerns of the age, Americans believed that the world had been kind to them and fully expected it to remain so in the years ahead.

For Negroes, the new century's arrival dispelled some of the clouds of the Nadir years. Though Negroes were being disfranchised in the South and were encountering almost all the difficulties of the past, they looked to the future with hopefulness. The nation's expanding economy promised better times for Negroes as well as whites; so, too, did national political developments. The Progressives became increasingly influential in national politics after Theodore Roosevelt's accession on September 14, 1901. Their attack on privilege and "invisible government" and their program of social and economic reform renewed hope among Negroes for the achievement of social justice.

THE ROOSEVELT ERA

One month after Roosevelt took office he gave Negroes reason to believe that he would reject the hands-off policy of his predecessors on the Negro question. On October 16, the President met with Booker T. Washington in the White House and dined with him. To Roosevelt's astonishment, the incident infuriated white Southerners. Negroes, however, were delighted with the recognition accorded their leader and with Roosevelt's refusal to acknowledge that a "blunder" had been committed. Roosevelt's prestige among Negroes rose further in May, 1902, when he vigorously denounced lynching as "human cruelty and barbarity." The President's subsequent appointment of William D. Crum as collector of customs at Charleston, South Carolina, and his refusal to accept the forced resignation of a Mississippi Negro postmistress, gave Negroes added cause for optimism. At last they, too, had a President.

Disillusionment returned during Roosevelt's second administration. In 1905, the President made two tours of the South during which he urged Negroes to place their reliance on their Southern white friends and forego entry into the professions. In Little Rock, Arkansas, according to one of Roosevelt's sympathetic biographers, the President offered "a quasi defense of the lynching of colored men for supposed outrages upon white women." With the exception of Booker T. Washington, most Negro leaders condemned Roosevelt after he returned from the second tour. It was becoming increasingly apparent that solutions to the Negroes' problems were not to be expected from the White House.

Other developments contributed to the end of optimism among Negroes. As Negroes moved into Northern and Southern urban areas after 1901, they continued to encounter tremendous difficulty in obtaining better jobs and adequate housing. Racial segregation in housing made it hard for them to find suitable living quarters and landlords used the limited supply of dwellings available to Negroes to exact exorbitant rentals. As Southern municipalities began to enact housing segregation ordinances, it became easier for white landlords to exploit Negro tenants. During the second decade of the century, Louisville, Baltimore, Richmond, and Atlanta began the practice of designating blocks as "white" and "Negro" so that Negroes could be prevented by law from moving into white neighborhoods. All newcomers to city life had to contend with the social ills resulting from unfavorable working and living conditions – delinquency, family disorganization and disintegration, poor health, high mortality rates – but race prejudice intensified these ills within the Negro ghetto. The stigma of color proved to be an almost insurmountable barrier to the world beyond the slum.

THE VIOLENT TIMES

Whatever optimism remained ended with the epidemic of race riots that swept the country early in the century. Though lynchings decreased slightly after 1901, there was a perceptible increase in the number and intensity of race riots. These violent outbursts underscored both the inadequacy of the protection the nation afforded its Negro citizens and the insecurity with which they lived.

In 1904, two Negroes were accused of murder in Statesboro, Georgia. Their trial touched off a state-wide frenzy of race violence during which scores of Negroes were assaulted without provocation. Immediately after the two defendants were convicted and sentenced, they were seized by a mob, dragged from the courtroom, and burned alive. The mob's leaders escaped unpunished.

On September 22, 1906, the most violent riots to occur in the South during this period broke out in Atlanta, Georgia. Whipped into a fury of race hatred by inflamed talk and by the movement to disfranchise Negroes, whites began assaulting almost every Negro in sight. Two days later, Negroes in Brownsville, an Atlanta suburb, began arming themselves as a defense against further attacks. Violence again broke out when police officers attempted to arrest the Negroes for bearing arms. Two whites and four Negroes were killed, many of both races were injured, and much property was destroyed. The president of a local Negro college was severely beaten over the head by a police official. Atlanta was virtually paralyzed for several days following the rioting. When calm returned, a group of Negro and white citizens organized the Atlanta Civic League to improve social conditions and to prevent further lawlessness, but those responsible for the bloodshed and violence went unpunished.

In August, 1906, a group of Negro soldiers raided Brownsville, Texas, in retaliation for racial insults. Race passions were stirred to a fever pitch when one white man was killed and two Negroes were wounded. Three months later, as the result of an official report blaming the soldiers for the riot, President Roosevelt dishonorably discharged three companies of the famed all-Negro Twenty-fifth Regiment. Though an act of Congress subsequently established a court of inquiry to review the cases of the discharged soldiers and though the innocent victims of Roosevelt's order were permitted to reenlist, most Negroes looked upon the President's handling of the episode as evidence of his apathy.

Race riots occurred throughout the North as well as the South. In August, 1908, a riot in Springfield, Illinois, required the use of 5,000 state militiamen to restore order. During the course of the riot two Negroes and four white men were killed, 70 persons were injured, and more than 100 arrests were made. Considerable Negro-owned property was destroyed. The riot, which took place a few months before the centennial of Lincoln's birth and within two miles of the Emancipator's home and final resting place, shocked the entire country and convinced men of both races that the time had come for more militant action.

RISING VOICES OF PROTEST

The deteriorating conditions of Negro life changed resistance to the policies of Booker T. Washington into open revolt. The publication of W.E.B. DuBois' *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903 crystallized opposition to the "Tuskegee Idea" of reliance upon the good will of Southern whites and turned Negroes toward more aggressive solutions to their problems. Under the leadership of DuBois and William Monroe Trotter, editor of the *Boston Guardian* and an implacable critic of Washington, a group of young intellectuals met at Niagara Falls, Canada, in June, 1905, to draw up plans for action. The conference issued an appeal for freedom of speech, press, and criticism and called for universal manhood suffrage, abolition of distinctions based on race, respect for the rights of workers, and recognition of the principles of human brotherhood. Incorporated as the Niagara Movement, the organization met the next year at Harpers Ferry in tribute to the memory of John Brown. Here a bitter manifesto was issued denouncing the treatment of Negroes in America. The convention held by the Niagara Movement in Oberlin, Ohio, in 1908 proved to be its last, for it was absorbed shortly thereafter by a new and even more resourceful organization. The Niagara Movement was significant in that it represented the first organized effort after Reconstruction to voice the Negro protest. It also presented an open challenge to the policies and leadership of Booker T. Washington.

The Springfield, Illinois, riot of 1908 convinced a number of white liberals of the seriousness of the Negroes' situation and of the need for a new undertaking to promote Negro freedom. Among them were William English Walling, a Southern writer whose description of the Springfield atrocities provoked national attention, Mary White Ovington and Dr. Henry Moskowitz, two New York City social workers, and Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of the *New York Post* and grandson of William Lloyd Garrison. They decided to hold a conference on the one hundreth anniversary of Lincoln's birth, February 12, 1909, to chart a more determined course of action. To publicize the conference, Villard prepared a formal call which was signed by a number of prominent Negro and white Americans. Plans were made at the meeting to establish a permanent interracial organization and to work for the civil rights and liberties of the Negro people. The new organization received the support of many who had participated in the Niagara Movement and, in May, 1910, it was incorporated under the laws of New York State as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Moorfield Storey, a Boston attorney, became the NAACP's first president and William English Walling its first executive committee chairman. DuBois, the only Negro among the association's first group of officers, served as director of publicity and research and as editor of *The Crisis*, a magazine designed to aid the NAACP in carrying out its program. Under the leadership of Storey and Arthur B. Spingarn, chairman of the Legal Redress Committee, an intensive effort was begun to secure stringent enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. In its first two decades, the legal committee won three major decisions before the United States Supreme Court. In 1915, in *Guinn v. United States*, the "grandfather clause" was declared null and void. In 1917, in *Buchanan v. Warley*, Louisville's housing segregation ordinance was held unconstitutional. In 1923, in *Moore v. Dempsey*, a new trial was ordered for a Negro on several grounds, among them the exclusion of Negroes from the jury. The NAACP's participation in Supreme Court proceedings became a major weapon in its fight for full citizenship.

The NAACP included in its program plans to improve economic opportunities for Negroes, but since the organization concentrated its efforts on a crusade for civil rights, it was unable to make much headway on economic problems. Negroes migrating from the rural South to urban areas after 1901 were in particular need of help and, in 1911, the National Urban League was founded to ease their transition to city life. Under the leadership of Dr. George E. Haynes, Eugene K. Jones, and Professor E.R.A. Seligman of Columbia University, the Urban League assisted Negroes in securing jobs and decent housing. It provided vocational counseling and health services and undertook to train young men and women to carry out its field work.

The Niagara Movement, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League and other organizations began before 1914 to deal with problems affecting the well-being of the Negro. Their revolt against the policies of Booker T. Washington prepared the way for the more determined assault on racial discrimination, lynching, disfranchisement, and exploitation that was to come during and following the Great War.

THE POLITICS OF PROGRESSIVISM

Like most Americans, Negroes were absorbed with domestic concerns as Europe moved toward war. The daily struggle for survival consumed most of their time and energy, leaving little of either to devote to foreign affairs. What political interest there was within the Negro community tended to concentrate on national rather than international events.

Developments in the nation's capital after 1905 were a major source of discouragement to American Negroes. Although the Progressive movement imbued the domestic policies of Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson with considerable humanitarianism, it had its conservative—sometimes even reactionary—aspects as well as its liberal impulses. The Progressives, for example, generally favored the restriction of immigration and displayed pronounced anti-Semitic tendencies. According to Foster Rhea

Dulles, Progressivism "was strongly marked by attitudes of racial superiority which found expression in support for the colonial rule of subject peoples, discrimination against Negroes, and intolerance toward the new immigrants from southeastern Europe." The Progressive mentality, says George E. Mowry, was a compound of many curious elements, and one of these was "a rather ugly strain of racism." Negro leaders had detected such a strain in statements made by Theodore Roosevelt during his tours of the South. They regarded Roosevelt with suspicion after the rioting in Brownsville, Texas, and they lacked confidence in his successor, William Howard Taft. Although Taft made the first appointment of a Negro, William H. Lewis, to a sub-cabinet post – that of assistant attorney-general – he ridiculed the possibility of interracial peace and argued that the expulsion of the Negro population was the only solution to America's racial dilemma. Many Negro leaders had become so distrustful of Roosevelt and Taft that they gave their support to Woodrow Wilson, the Southern-born Democratic candidate for President in 1912. In the election that year, thousands of Negroes broke with tradition and joined with white Southerners in voting for the Democratic nominee.

If Negroes were disheartened when Wilson appointed a number of Southern Democrats to cabinet posts, they were appalled when Congress, under Democratic control, received more anti-Negro bills that had ever before been introduced in a single session. Although most of these measures died in committee, the President bowed to Southern pressure and, by executive order, segregated Negro federal workers in the use of employees' facilities.

The years preceding America's entry into World War I were fraught with sorrow for American Negroes. The year 1915, which marked the fiftieth anniversary of emancipation, witnessed the lynching of 69 Negroes, the resurrection of the Ku Klux Klan, and the showing of a film, "The Birth of a Nation," based on the violently anti-Negro writings of Thomas Dixon. The death of Booker T. Washington in November, 1915, left no leader among Negroes of equal national prominence. In 1916, while two Negro regiments were taking part in General Pershing's punitive expedition into Mexico, Negroes at home continued to suffer oppression and violence. A Negro was publicly burned in Waco, Texas, while thousands of onlookers cheered, and another was lynched in South Carolina for "impudence" in refusing to agree to a price for his cotton seed.

Shortly after the United States entered the war in April, 1917, a race riot broke out in East St. Louis, Illinois. Estimates of the number of

Negroes killed ranged from 40 to 200. Martial law was declared to restore order. On July 28, some 10,000 Negroes marched down Fifth Avenue in New York City in silent protest against lynchings and racial indignities. America had embarked upon its crusade to make the world safe for democracy, but it had neglected democracy at home.

Negroes in the First World War

The declaration of war on April 6, 1917 revealed still another aspect of the nation's racial dilemma: the question of Negro participation in the armed forces. Thousands of Negroes responded to America's entry into the war by attempting to enlist. Army quotas for Negro troops were quickly filled – some 10,000 Negroes were already in the Regular Army when war was declared – and the War Department stopped accepting Negro volunteers within a week. Negroes were barred then and thereafter from the Marines and the Coast Guard, while the Navy permitted them to serve only in the most menial capacities. The passage of the Selective Service Act in May, 1917, removed quota restrictions on Negroes in the Army. During the war, 367,000 Negroes were called into service under this act. Of the more than 2,000,000 Negroes who registered for the draft, 31% were accepted as compared with 26% of the white enrollees; the difference was due to the disinclination of some draft boards to act fairly toward Negroes in the matter of exemptions and deferments.

The Selective Service Act ended restrictions on Negro inductions into the Army but there were no provisions for the training of Negroes as officers. Concern over this matter became widespread when Colonel Charles Young, the highest ranking Negro officer at this time, was retired from the Army because of high blood pressure. Although Col. Young rode horseback from Wilberforce, Ohio, to the national capital to demonstrate his fitness, the retirement board refused him permission to serve actively in the Army. Negro leaders soon began urging that qualified Negroes be trained for commissions. An organized protest resulted in the establishment of an all-Negro officers' training camp at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. On October 15, 1917, the first group of 106 captains and 533 first and second lieutenants received Army commissions at the camp. Other Negroes were later commissioned at non-segregated camps and in the field.

The northern migration of Negroes, the training of Negro troops in the South, continued lynchings, and German propaganda caused considerable racial friction during the war years. To minimize the effects of interracial discord on the war effort, and to promote good morale among

Negro soldiers and civilians, Emmett J. Scott, former secretary to Booker T. Washington, was appointed special assistant to the Secretary of War. As confidential advisor in matters affecting Negroes, it was Scott's task to see that Selective Service regulations were equally and impartially enforced. An important function of his office was the investigation of cases in which unfair treatment was charged.

Problems resulting from the training of Negro troops in the South provided Scott with some of his most difficult assignments and plagued the War Department throughout the conflict. At a meeting held in August, 1917, government officials assured white Southerners that they would not send Northern Negroes to training camps in the South. This policy so hampered the Army's training program that it was quickly abandoned. Negroes endured discriminatory treatment from white Army officers and officials of servicemen's organizations, but their bitterest antagonists proved to be Southern white civilians. Violence broke out in September, 1917, in Houston, Texas, when civilians insulted and threatened Negro soldiers stationed there. Continuing harrassment led to the killing of 17 whites and resulted in the court-martial of 64 members of the Twenty-fourth Infantry. After hasty deliberations by an all-white tribunal, 13 soldiers were hanged for murder, 41 were sentenced to life imprisonment, and a number of others were held in custody pending further investigations. Galling insults to Negroes in uniform almost caused another outbreak of violence in Spartansburg, South Carolina. In this case, as in others to follow, bloodshed was averted by promptly sending overseas the Negro troops involved.

Of the 100,000 Negroes who were sent to Europe, more than half served in labor and stevedore battalions. Although they performed essential duties in unloading ships and sending supplies to the front lines, they suffered tremendous hardships, often under brutal commanders. Many of these soldiers came to resent their employment as laborers rather than as fighters in the ranks. Negroes who were assigned to combat duty, principally with the Ninety-second and Ninety-third Divisions, made an enviable record. New York's 369th Infantry, for example, was cited for bravery eleven times, and the entire regiment received the French Croix de Guerre for gallantry in action at Maison-en-Champagne. The first Allied unit to reach the Rhine, the 369th — dubbed the "Hell Fighters" by the Germans — saw continuous action from July, 1918, until the armistice; 171 of its officers and men were individually decorated with the Croix de Guerre and the Legion of Honor. Two soldiers of the 369th, Henry Johnson and Needham Roberts, were the first Americans to be decorated for bravery in France, and their exploits were headlined in newspapers throughout America.

Some dissension developed among Negro leaders concerning the course they should pursue during the war. Several feared that the crusade for democracy abroad would subvert the struggle for justice and equality at home; a few adopted pacifism as a method of registering their protest. In the July 1918 issue of *The Crisis*, W.E.B. DuBois wrote a strong editorial in which he advocated support for the war effort. "Let us not hesitate," he wrote. "Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our white citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy." DuBois' editorial helped to heal the rift within the Negro leadership and promoted enthusiasm for the war effort among the Negro masses. One indication of this enthusiasm was the response to the Liberty Bond drives; according to one estimate, Negroes bought more than $250,000,000 worth of war bonds and stamps. Perhaps even more significant was the role played by Negro farmers and workmen in producing and conserving vital food supplies and other agricultural and industrial products.

While thousands of Negroes were fighting overseas, other thousands at home began a mass migration from the rural South to urban centers of the North. Although social factors played a part in this movement, the basic cause for the so-called Great Migration was undoubtedly economic. A labor depression in the South in 1914 brought a general reduction in wage rates. During 1915 and 1916, crop failures, floods, and the ravages of the boll weevil disrupted much of the South's agriculture. Already victimized by the tenancy system, thousands of Negroes found themselves destitute and homeless as a result of these events and were forced to move northward. The lure of Northern prosperity probably exerted even more influence upon them. Defense production and a sharp decline in immigration had increased the demand for labor throughout the North. According to the Bureau of the Census, the states of the North and West showed a net gain of 330,000 Negroes during the decade ending in 1920. One authority estimates that a million Negroes ultimately took part in the migration.

As in the 1870's and 1880's, Southerners attempted to halt the trek to the North. In Jacksonville, Florida, an ordinance was passed requiring migration agents to pay a license fee of $1,000. Some localities banned the sale of Negro newspapers for fear that accounts of Northern life would persuade more Negroes to migrate. Reports circulated that deputy sheriffs were taking Negroes from northbound trains to prevent the loss of cheap labor. These efforts to stem the exodus proved fruitless and the movement northward gained momentum.

Upon their arrival in the North the migrants encountered new and complex problems, but they also found less racial prejudice, higher wages, and better educational opportunities for their children. Many Northern industries offered Negroes unusual employment opportunities during the war years, and this bolstered the newcomers' hopes for the future. By 1920, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Chicago, in the order named, had the largest Negro communities in the country.

THE RED SUMMER

Negroes entered the post-war period hoping not only to consolidate the economic and social gains of the war years but also to secure an even larger measure of opportunity and freedom. Their expectations were short-lived. The 25 race riots that occurred from June, 1919, to the end of the year gave substance to the fear that America would return to "normalcy" rather than to wartime idealism as far as the Negro was concerned. The summer of 1919, called by James Weldon Johnson "The Red Summer," saw the most violent interracial strife the nation had ever known. Riots broke out in every section of the country — in Longview, Texas; in Chicago, Illinois; in Knoxville, Tennessee; in Omaha, Nebraska. Six persons were killed and 150 wounded after three days of rioting in Washington, D.C. The most serious outbreak took place in Chicago late in July. The drowning of a young Negro who had been attacked by white swimmers led to an altercation which mushroomed into 13 days of mob rule. When the violence was over, 38 persons had been killed, 537 had been injured, and more than 1,000 families, mostly Negro, had been made homeless by the destruction of property. Lynching statistics indicate the extent of the hatred that swept the nation in 1919; more Negroes were lynched that year than in any of the previous ten years. Among the 83 lynch victims were ten Negro soldiers, several still in uniform.

Why the Red Summer? A number of forces provoked the explosions that rocked America in 1919. One was the migration that began during the war and that created new pressures as Negroes and whites competed for jobs during the post-war business decline. Another was the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. Revived in 1915, the Klan grew slowly until the end of the war when its membership jumped to 100,000. The 200 public appearances made by the Klan in 1919 converted additional thousands to its cause; its tactics inspired numerous imitators and gave the lawless elements in every section of the country a rationale for violence. Even the Negroes' military service in World War I induced hostility toward them during the first year of peace. Those Southerners who had deplored the arming of Negroes now saw every Negro veteran as a potential insurrectionary. Convinced that the Negro had been "spoiled" in France, they were determined to put him "in his place" regardless of the cost to human life. Almost any breach of the racial code by a Negro ex-serviceman was sure to bring swift and severe punishment. Of all the causes of the Red Summer, perhaps the most fundamental was the wave of nativism which accompanied America's return to normalcy and isolation. The hysteria that followed demobilization was compounded, according to Harvey Wish, of "a Red Scare, chauvinism, racialism, and a middle-class fear that organized labor was plotting revolution." Negroes were the first but not the only group of Americans to confront the terrors of the post-war reaction.

However strange it may seem, a stronger Negro America emerged from the bloodbaths of the Red Summer. City life had fostered self-respect and cohesiveness within the Negro community, while the war had given Negroes a greater awareness of the meaning of democracy. As a result, Negroes offered unusual resistance to their oppressors. They showed a disposition to defend themselves that made mobs pay a high price for their sadism. A new complication had been added to America's social dilemma: Negroes could no longer be intimidated into submission. They were in a new war, and they were determined to fight back. "If we must die," wrote the poet Claude McKay, "let it not be like hogs."

O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying but fighting back!

But other ways were also needed. Under the leadership of the NAACP, a militant course of action was begun. Late in 1919, the association stepped up its campaign to secure the passage of a federal antilynching law. In 1921, James Weldon Johnson, executive secretary of the NAACP, persuaded Congressman L. C. Dyer of Missouri to introduce into the House of Representatives a bill to assure citizens the equal protection of the law and to punish the crime of lynching. Although the bill was passed in the House by a vote of 230-119, it was defeated in the Senate through filibuster.

More successful was the NAACP's legal fight against the exclusion of Negroes from primary elections in the South. In 1927 and in 1932, the Supreme Court nullified two Texas statutes which permitted the exclusion of Negroes from the Democratic primaries. In 1944, it declared that political parties could not bar Negroes from primaries even in the absence of enabling legislation. As a result of such decisions, Negroes came to regard the Court rather than the Congress as the most trustworthy guarantor of citizenship rights.

THE GARVEY MOVEMENT

Although the NAACP, the Urban League, and other organizations made substantial efforts to improve Negro life, they did not attract a large following among the Negro masses. Many of the poorer Negroes felt that their interests were being ignored by these interracial organizations. This conviction was strengthened by the social and economic hardship of the post-war decade and made possible the rise of Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association – a movement which has been called the first real mass movement among Negroes in the United States.

The basic doctrine of the UNIA was not unlike that of the American Colonization Society of the early nineteenth century. It advocated a "back to Africa" movement based upon the assumption that Negroes could not expect to gain rights from white Americans. Unlike the American Colonization Society, Marcus Garvey's association was an all-Negro venture which appealed strongly to race pride. It sought to carry on its program with financial support from Negro-owned business enterprises in the United States.

Garvey founded the UNIA in his native Jamaica and organized its first American chapter following his arrival in the United States in 1916. The movement grew rapidly after the end of the war, probably reaching its maximum growth in 1923 when Garvey claimed a membership of six million. Several authorities have questioned this claim – one estimates a peak enrollment of 500,000 – but none will deny that Garvey had a magnetic effect upon poverty-stricken urban Negroes.

In 1925, Garvey was imprisoned for the use of the mails to defraud, and his organization began to decline. Garvey continued his efforts to promote "Negro Zionism" following his deportation in 1927, but he failed to persuade American Negroes that African colonization offered them the most satisfactory solution to their problems. The movement's popularity may be ascribed to the social ills and frustrations of the post-war period rather than to any substantial support for its founder's objectives. Despite continuing oppression, most Negroes could not abandon their hopes for first-class citizenship in their native land.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

During the twenties, thousands of Southern Negroes joined the trek northward. They found increased employment opportunities in the automotive trades, in glass and paper manufacturing, and in the food, clothing, and transportation industries, but they were by no means uniformly successful in achieving economic security. Like those who had come before, they were for the most part excluded from the ranks of organized labor. At least three new organizations were founded during the decade to promote trade unionism among Negroes, but they made little headway. The indifference and hostility of white workers, and the failure of Negro labor leaders to join together in a common cause, precluded the movement's success. The only new Negro union to achieve a noteworthy triumph was the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids organized by A. Philip Randolph in 1925. Supported by the American Federation of Labor, the NAACP, and the National Urban League, the Brotherhood gained partial recognition from the Pullman Company in 1926 and in 1929; it did not win full recognition as collective bargaining agent until 1937.

The millions of Negroes who remained in the South continued to experience hardship and privation. For them, the Great Depression began even before America entered the Great War. Farm ownership among Negroes declined throughout the twenties. Overexpanded by wartime demand, American agriculture suffered from competition in an international market over which farmers had little control. The result was that the nation's agrarian population, which included a majority of Negroes, did not share in the material abundance of the 1920's.

During the first post-war decade, there was an increase in the number of business enterprises owned by Negroes; but at the same time, the proportion of Negro-owned retail establishments declined. Business inexperience added to the difficulties involved in maintaining such enterprises; another factor was the inability of Negro merchants to withstand price competition from white-owned firms and chain stores. The very fact that Negro businessmen depended almost exclusively on trade within the Negro community weighed heavily against their success. As Louis E. Lomax has pointed out, "Negro business failed because it was 'Negro'; it assumed that a separate Negro economy could exist within the white economy." However desirable, a self-sufficient Negro economy could not be developed as long as family income depended upon the broader economy and swiftly followed its ups and downs. In the Negro ghettos, mass unemployment and a high incidence of business failure were the characteristic results of any downward trend in general business conditions. Signs of an approaching depression were clearly visible within the Negro world of the mid-twenties when thousands of workers lost their jobs. The widespread economic collapse that followed the October 1929 crash affected relatively few Negroes. They were already in the Depression.

The Great Depression was a traumatic experience for all Americans who lived through it, but its worst effects were felt in the tenements and farmhouses of Negro America. Negroes encountered serious discrimination even when numerous whites were joining with them in a brotherhood of poverty. They were forced to accept differentials in public assistance payments, were refused relief work, and barred from some soup kitchens. For the Negro masses, the American dream of democracy had become a nightmare of oppressions. They were at the bottom of the pit and, having struck bottom, they could fall no further. Despondency gave way to determination as more and more Negroes came to realize that only through energetic political action could they retrieve lost ground. Forged by violence and suffering, an aroused consciousness urged Negroes to rise up again, to move forward to genuine freedom. This consciousness found eloquent expression in the movement that came to be known as the "Harlem Renaissance."

A Renaissance Begins in Harlem

The cultural movement that has been variously known as the "New Negro Movement," the "Black Renaissance," and the "Harlem Renaissance" was essentially, though not exclusively, a development of the first post-war decade. An approaching "renaissance" was clearly discernible after 1900 as Negroes gained renown for their literary, scientific, and artistic attainments. It was during the pre-war period that such prominent figures in the New Negro Movement as W.E.B. DuBois and James Weldon Johnson first achieved recognition for their writings. It was during this period that Daniel Hale Williams successfully performed radical heart surgery; George Washington Carver became nationally known for his experiments in applied science; Matthew Henson gained fame for his Arctic explorations; and Henry Ossawa Tanner won international prizes for his paintings. An outspoken Negro press developed during this era – a press typified by Robert S. Abbott's *Chicago Defender* – which provided Negroes with an effective medium for expressing their aspirations. Such participants in the New Negro Movement as the novelist William S. Braithwaite, the poet Claude McKay, and the historian Carter G. Woodson had established reputations before the 1920's.

Founded upon earlier cultural strivings, the New Negro Movement gained considerable momentum from developments during and following the first World War. The racial clashes of the era moved a small but growing group of white writers to deal forthrightly with the difficulties faced by Negro Americans. When such authors as Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Eugene O'Neill, and Carl Van Vechten began to criticize the social and economic disparities of American life, they displayed extraordinary concern for the Negro and his problems. The Great Migration had made it possible for more white writers to know Negroes at close range and in considerable numbers; their writings rekindled Northern liberal interest in the Negro and created a wider market for Negro literary and artistic talents. At the same time, the Great Migration and the Red Summer gave Negro writers a keener realization of the injustices which confronted their people. While some were inclined to exploit the growing interest in Negro problems, most were concerned with seeking genuine improvement in Negro life. The writers who predominated in the New Negro Movement had a detachment and objectivity which allowed them to deal with Negro themes without excessive rancor or bitterness. They were not seeking the destruction of the American system; they were attempting to improve its operation. Theirs was essentially a literature of protest rather than of rebellion or escape.

New York City inevitably became the "Florence" of the Negro Renaissance. Northern migration helped to increase the city's Negro population to more than 50,000 by 1900; by 1920, New York City, with 152,000 Negroes, had the largest Negro population of all the cities in America. Moreover, it had experienced no severe race riot after 1900. The riot that occurred that year had so stirred Negro New Yorkers that they took effective measures to prevent further outbursts and to improve Negro life. Of all the urban Negro communities, that of New York City was easily the most militant by 1920. New York City had witnessed the formation of the NAACP and had watched the silent protest parade of 1917; it had read innumerable denunciations of injustices in its newspapers and magazines. As the nation's cultural center, it had shown its appreciation of Negro artistic, literary, and theatrical talents. Its Negro and white citizens had shared in the prosperity of the war years; they now stood ready to welcome a Harlem Renaissance.

The Harlem Renaissance was first and foremost a literary movement, and its themes were most eloquently stated by its poets. Claude McKay, a West Indian Negro who had come to this country in 1912, is regarded as the first significant writer of the movement. The publication of his

Harlem Shadows in 1922 brought him considerable acclaim. His poetry cogently voiced the assertiveness, the defiance, and the contempt that came to characterize much of the writings of the New Negro Movement. Three years after McKay's book was published, a volume of poetry appeared that won for its author, Countee Cullen, tremendous critical praise. When the volume, *Color*, was published, Cullen, a native New Yorker, was only 22 years old, but his writings were those of a mature lyric poet. Like McKay, Cullen wrote of the race problem; unlike McKay, he did so subtly, delicately, and imaginatively. The quality of his verse and its rich intellectual content have made Countee Cullen one of the major poets of twentieth-century America. Another poet, Langston Hughes, used humor as a vehicle for protest. A prolific writer, Hughes displayed a wide range of emotions in his verse. He wrote movingly of the lowly, but he could also write introspective verse that clearly conveyed his pride of race. Hughes was a versatile writer; in addition to poetry, he wrote a novel, *Not Without Laughter*, in 1930 and a volume of short stories, *The Ways of the White Folks*, in 1934. By the end of the Renaissance's first decade, Hughes was regarded as the "Shakespeare" of the movement.

The works of novelists found a larger audience than did those of the poets. Among the well-known novelists were Nella Larsen, Eric Walrond, Wallace Thurman, Rudolph Fisher, and George S. Schuyler. One of the most successful novelists of the New Negro Movement was Jessie Redmond Fauset. The publication of *There Is Confusion* in 1924 placed her in the front ranks of the literary movement. While she dealt with the problem of race, she depicted Negroes in situations not unlike those confronting other Americans of similar economic and social status. She portrayed upper- and middle-class Negro urban life and emphasized the paradoxes and ironies of color. Another novelist, Walter White, deserted the field of fiction in 1929 when he wrote *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch*. He had previously completed two successful novels. His *Fire in the Flint* (1924) dealt with Southern racial problems, while *Flight* (1926) probed the so-called compulsion to "pass" — a dominant force in the lives of many Negroes.

In addition to the writings of DuBois and James Weldon Johnson, essays and articles were published in numerous magazines by the economist Abram L. Harris, the sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, and the literary critic Alain Locke. A collection of the "first fruits" of the Harlem Renaissance, *The New Negro* (1925), edited by Locke, brought its contributors wider public recognition.

Charles Gilpin's appearance in the play *Abraham Lincoln* in 1919 marked the revival of interest in the Negro in the theater. In 1920, Gilpin created the title role of Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* and won acclaim for himself as well as the playwright. Paul Robeson won plaudits in 1924 when he played the leading role in O'Neill's *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. Rose McClendon and Frank Wilson captivated theater audiences with their roles in *Porgy*, a folk-play by Dorothy and Du Bose Heyward which was produced by the Theater Guild in 1927, while Richard B. Harrison achieved fame for his portrayal of "De Lawd" in Marc Connelly's *The Green Pastures*. Harrison's performance helped to make the play an enduring theatrical success after its initial run in 1930.

The Harlem Renaissance had a tremendous impact on Negro performers in the field of lighter entertainment. Bert Williams and George Walker had appeared as a vaudeville team in many revues after 1896, while Bob Cole and J. Rosamond Johnson had achieved success in the musical comedy field during World War I, but when a Negro revue, *Shuffle Along*, opened in New York in 1921, it revolutionized the theater world. Its popular songs, its talented singers and dancers, and its extravagant settings and costumes made it an outstanding success. Produced by F. E. Miller, Aubrey Lyles, Eubie Blake, and Noble Sissle, the revue ran for more than a year and toured the country for two years thereafter. Another revue by Blake and Sissle introduced Josephine Baker to theatergoers in 1923. Florence Mills, Ethel Waters, Adelaide Hall, Ada Ward, and Bill Robinson were some of the other stars to brighten the stage of the 1920's.

In the field of serious music, Harry T. Burleigh, R. Nathaniel Dett, and J. Rosamond Johnson wrote and edited Negro spirituals and other compositions. Greater fame came to such concert singers as Paul Robeson, Lawrence Brown, Taylor Gordon, and Roland Hayes. Though no artist compared to Henry Ossawa Tanner, at least three Negroes — Aaron Douglas, Laura Wheeler Waring, and Edward A. Harleston — produced works of sufficient quality to earn them important commissions.

Although the New Negro Movement was dominated by New Yorkers, its influence was felt wherever Negroes lived. It inspired young men and women in every section of the country to forge ahead, to seek careers in fields that traditionally had been barred to them. More important, the movement's leaders had begun the destruction of myths which had plagued the Negro from his earliest days in the New World. They had proven both to Negroes and whites that a vast reservoir of talents remained untapped. The Harlem Renaissance ended its first phase with the Depression, but it had widened the Negro's route to the Promised Land. Just as the pre-war protest movement had prepared the way for the political resurgence of the 1930's, the first decade of the Harlem Renaissance was merely a prelude of the cultural achievements to come.

Chapter 9

RESURGENCE AND REFORM: 1933-1945

At the beginning of the 1930's the United States experienced the most disastrous economic collapse in its history. So shattering were the effects of this collapse, and so acute was the resultant sense of bewilderment and defeat, that there was fear for the very survival of democracy in America. The Great Depresion presented an awesome challenge to nationhood: the need to remedy serious social and economic ills while preserving intact the basic political institutions of a democracy. It was within the context of this challenge that there began, under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, an era of experimentation and change that profoundly affected the nation's subsequent history. The New Deal created considerable controversy in establishing the federal government's responsibility for economic well-being, in undertaking broad social programs, and in shifting political allegiances; the basic premises of its program, however, have since been accepted by both major political parties. In its time, the New Deal gave the nation a viable democratic alternative to fascism and communism—an alternative, many historians believe, which permitted a distinctive American way of life to survive the totalitarian onslaughts of the thirties and thereafter.

It was almost inevitable that, during the Roosevelt years, the American Negro was to accelerate his movement toward the mainstream of American life. As the New Deal came to grips with the depression crisis, it strengthened humanitarian ideals and gave America's minority groups renewed faith in the ultimate triumph of the American dream. However vague Roosevelt's initial intentions, his call for freedom and equality and his concern for the ill-housed, the ill-clothed and the ill-fed stimulated compassion for the common man. By invoking the Jeffersonian-Jacksonian tradition of social reform, the New Deal underscored the importance of equal opportunity and, in so doing, called attention to the problems of the nation's minorities. It released forces strong enough to penetrate the walls of the Negro ghettos and encourage a social transformation that could only be regarded as revolutionary.

THE RETURN TO POLITICS

During the New Deal period, American Negroes, for the first time since

Reconstruction, had acquired sufficient political strength to be regarded as a factor in national politics. The political resurgence that had made this possible was, in fact, one of the most striking and portentous developments in Negro life during the post-World War I era. Its roots lay in the Great Migration that had begun during that war. The concentration of Negroes in the large Northern urban centers created many problems of adjustment, but once the migrants had adapted themselves to the freer environment of city life, they acquired a measure of economic power and a yearning for success that they had never before experienced. They also found fewer obstacles to the exercise of their voting rights. These factors combined to produce an upsurge of political-mindedness within the Negro ghettos of the principal Northern cities. The newcomers soon realized that the ballot was an effective instrument for the improvement of their status and living conditions.

There were intimations of a political revival among Negroes as early as 1915 when Oscar DePriest was elected alderman from Chicago's densely populated South Side. In New York City, Negroes had acquired enough political strength by 1917 to send Edward A. Johnson to the state assembly. When George H. White, the last of the post-Civil War Negro Congressmen, retired from the House of Representatives in 1901, he predicted the Negro's return. His prophecy was fulfilled in 1928 when DePriest was elected to the national legislaure on the Republican ticket. DePriest thus became the first Northern Negro in the nation's history to win a seat in the House of Representatives.

As more Negroes grew adept at big-city politics, they began to make effective use of the ballot in registering their protest. After 1923, they campaigned against those Senators who had succeeded in filibustering the Dyer antilynching bill to death. In 1930, Negroes vigorously protested Hoover's appointment of John J. Parker to the Supreme Court because of reports that Parker had spoken out against their participation in politics. After Parker's appointment was rejected by the Senate, Negro voters helped to defeat two of the Senators who had favored confirmation. During and following the New Deal period, Negroes were to become even more resourceful in the use of the ballot to express their grievances.

The Negroes' political resurgence was accompanied by an even more astonishing development: their final disaffection with, and departure from, the Republican party. In 1928, the Republicans stepped up their effort to regain the support of white Southerners. To accomplish this goal, the party's strategists turned against Southern Negro leaders who had carried the Republican banner since Reconstruction. They withheld the patronage from Negro Republicans and refused to seat Negro delegates at party conventions. This "lily-white movement" caused many Negroes to desert the Republican party in 1928 and vote for Alfred E. Smith, the Democratic candidate. There were even more desertions in 1932. President Hoover's nomination of Judge Parker and his support of white Republicanism in the South cost him many Negro votes. Negroes joined with other Americans in holding Hoover responsible for the depression and in disparaging his attempts to halt the collapse of the economy. The shift to the Democratic party was symbolized in 1934 when Arthur W. Mitchell, a former Republican, was elected on the Democratic ticket to succeed Oscar DePriest in the House of Representatives. It was most recently confirmed in 1962 when all five Negroes elected to Congress won their seats on Democratic tickets.

The Democratic capture of the Negro voter was a political reality of the 1936 elections. Though many Negroes remained true to tradition and continued to cast their ballots for the party of Lincoln, Negroes in the Northern urban centers voted in large numbers for Roosevelt. After 1940, the nation divided its political allegiance more evenly, and the Negro vote tended to follow this trend. Negro voters have since been courted by both major political parties. The size and changing inclinations of the Negro electorate have often caused considerable anxiety within both Democratic and Republican circles, particularly in such pivotal states as Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, California, and New York.

As Negroes increased their influence in national politics, there was a corresponding increase in the number of Negroes elected or appointed to local and state offices. By 1946, some thirty Negroes were serving in the legislatures of ten states. In 1956, there were forty Negro state lawmakers, some of them in the legislatures of Southern border states. In 1962, three Negroes were elected to statewide offices in the North. Well before that year, Negroes were elected to city councils, school boards, and other local government offices in every region of the country. After 1930, when two Negroes were elected to municipal judgeships in New York City, other municipalities elected or appointed Negroes to judicial posts. The number of Negroes in state or local public administration increased throughout the period. In carrying out their functions, these officeholders helped to improve living conditions in many communities. They also called attention to the contributions other qualified Negroes could make to the nation's well-being.

The Democratic Roosevelts and the "Black Cabinet"

Once in office, Franklin Delano Roosevelt amassed a substantial following among Negroes. The President's program of relief and public works was especially helpful to Negroes who had experienced the worst effects of the economic collapse. Roosevelt gave the Negro masses a sense of belonging, a feeling that the government in Washington was genuinely concerned for their welfare. Like many other Americans, Negroes saw Roosevelt as a Lincoln reincarnate; he seemed a father shouldering the burdens of a troubled nation. Roosevelt's prestige within the Negro world was enhanced when it became known that both he and Mrs. Roosevelt frequently received Negroes, visited Negro institutions, and had Negroes as personal friends. Mrs. Roosevelt was especially friendly toward Negroes. She counted Mary McLeod Bethune among her most intimate friends and often dined with this eminent educator. She invited the National Council of Negro Women, headed by Mrs. Bethune, to a White House tea. These activities were given wide coverage in the Negro press and persuaded Negroes that the Democratic Roosevelts were truly their own First Family.

President Roosevelt's commitment to a national program of relief and rehabilitation and Mrs. Roosevelt's concern for the plight of the Negro masses paved the way for increased Negro participation in the federal administration. As new agencies were created to deal with economic and social problems, "Negro specialists" were brought to Washington to serve as aides and advisers. In fact, the number of Negroes appointed to government posts was sufficiently large to create the impression that Roosevelt had formed a "Negro Brain Trust." There was hardly a government department that did not have a highly qualified Negro in a top advisory spot. More than two score Negroes filled important positions in Roosevelt's so-called "Black Cabinet." Robert L. Vann, editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, served as Special Assistant to the Attorney General. William H. Hastie, Dean of the Howard University Law School, began his government service as Assistant Solicitor in the Interior Department; he subsequently became Judge of the Virgin Islands, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War, Governor of the Virgin Islands and, finally, Judge of the United States Court of Appeals. Robert C. Weaver worked in several government agencies during the early years of the New Deal; in 1961, he became administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, the highest federal post ever held by an American Negro. Mary McLeod Bethune, founder-president of Bethune-Cookman College, was appointed Director of the Division of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration and, with Weaver, unofficially presided over the "Black Cabinet." Other Negroes, in most cases drawn from college faculties, served as specialists in the federal departments and agencies.

According to Richard Bardolph, more than a hundred Negroes had been brought into the federal government by 1940. The number was substantially increased after that year as the war emergency enlarged the scope of the government's operations. Among the Negroes to serve in key positions during this new period of crisis were Mrs. Crystal Bird Fauset, a former member of the Pennsylvania legislature who became racial adviser in the Office of Civilian Defense; Ted Poston, of the *New York Post*, who was appointed to a similar position in the Office of War Information; and Colonel Campbell Johnson who was executive assistant to General Lewis B. Hershey of the National Selective Service. One of the young Negroes to enter government service at this time was a relatively unknown Howard University professor, Ralph J. Bunche, who took a position with the Library of Congress; Bunche later went to the Office of Strategic Services and then to a permanent post in the State Department – a position from which he launched his meteoric rise to fame.

The formation of Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet" represented a distinct break with the past. Negroes, of course, had been appointed to their traditional quota of diplomatic posts – principally as ministers to Haiti and Liberia – since the turn of the century and a few Negroes like Booker T. Washington had served as unofficial government advisers. The number of Negro appointees had declined perceptibly under Wilson and, as indicated earlier, the "lily-white" Republican movement had curtailed Negro appointments during the 1920's. The New Deal reversed this trend. The Negroes serving in Washington during the Roosevelt years differed in several noteworthy respects from their predecessors: their number was large and constantly changing; their qualifications were high; they held important positions; and they were oath-bound public officials rather than unofficial advisers.

The organization of the "Negro Brain Trust" is of far-reaching significance in that it gave new momentum to the movement for increased Negro participation in political affairs. It brought professional fulfillment to Negroes with established professional reputations and provided training and experience for those just beginning their careers. Their assignments required the members of the "Black Cabinet" to devote much of their time to the problems confronting Negroes, but they were frequently called upon to help formulate broad national policies. They thus made substantial contributions to many of the New Deal programs and used their talents to promote the welfare of all Americans.

THE SEARCH FOR JOBS

Suffering was especially widespread among the Negro masses during the Great Depression. As "the last hired and the first fired," Negroes experienced the worst effects of the decline in employment. White workers were displacing Negroes even in industries in which they had won acceptance and were competing for the menial jobs which traditionally had been filled by Negroes. By 1934, 17% of the whites were regarded as incapable of self-support while 38% of the Negro population was so-classified. In May, 1934, while 52.2% of the Negroes in Northern cities were on relief, only 13.3% of the whites were in a similar plight. By 1935, one out of every four Negroes in the United States was receiving public assistance. In Detroit, 29% of the persons on relief were Negro; in New York City, the figure was 13%. Particularly acute was the plight of Negroes in Southern urban communities. In Atlanta, 65% of the Negro employables were on relief. In Birmingham, almost 70% of the persons on the relief rolls were Negro.

Discrimination in employment was particularly vexing to Negroes at a time when so few employment opportunities were available to them. To counteract such discrimination and to create employment for Negro workers, a "Jobs-for-Negroes" movement was launched in St. Louis early in the thirties. The movement soon spread to Pittsburgh, Chicago, Cleveland, and other cities. Its leaders urged Negroes to patronize only those stores which employed Negro help. Through picketing and boycotts, pressure was brought upon white employers doing business in Negro communities to hire Negro workers. In 1933, an intensive employment campaign was begun in New York City with the organization of the Citizen's League for Fair Play. As a result of the campaign, hundreds of Negroes obtained jobs in Harlem stores and with the major public utility companies doing business in the area.

Resentment against discrimination in employment continued, however, and on March 19, 1935, a major riot broke out in Harlem. During the course of this riot three Negroes were killed, 200 stores were wrecked, and more than $2,000,000 worth of damage was done. Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia quickly appointed an interracial Committee on Conditions in Harlem to investigate the outbreak. Its staff of investigators was headed by the sociologist E. Franklin Frazier. In its report, the Committee concluded that "'resentments against racial discrimination and poverty in the midst of plenty" provoked the riot. There was insufficient private and public relief, it charged, to stem the unrest that prevailed in Harlem and in other Negro urban communities.

HE NEGRO AND THE NEW DEAL PROGRAM

Negro Americans had ample reason to hope for the success of the New Deal's program of relief, recovery, and reform. Discrimination, however, made for variations in the benefits received by Negroes. This was invariably the case when the New Deal's programs were administered by state agencies or by individuals prejudiced against the Negro. The "codes of fair competition" that were drafted under the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 frequently provided lower minimum wages for Negroes than for whites. Grants intended for Negro farmers in the crop reduction programs of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration were lost to them as landlords took advantage of their tenants and sharecroppers. Since few Negroes were covered by the Social Security Act when it was passed in 1935 (agricultural and domestic workers were then excluded from coverage) a large portion of the Negro population was unable to receive old-age assistance and unemployment benefits. Southern Negroes who met the qualifications for old-age assistance were often given smaller payments than those provided for aged whites since state agencies administered the program. While a million Negroes benefited from the wage and hours provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, several million did not since agricultural and domestic workers were again excluded from coverage. The Tennessee Valley Authority, the Rural Electrification Administration, and the Federal Land Bank provided Negroes with many benefits, but these were seldom in proportion to their needs or numbers.

Despite such limitations, many New Deal measures gave Negroes opportunities that had not existed before. Under the leadership of Will W. Alexander, the Farm Security Administration was especially helpful to Negroes. The loans and technical aid given by this agency made it possible for thousands of Negro farmers to buy land and improve their holdings. The Home Owners Loan Corporation enabled some Negroes to purchase residences of their own. By subsidizing the construction of low-cost housing developments, the various Housing Authorities provided many Negro families with their first modern apartment units. The first public housing project to be built exclusively for Negroes was in Atlanta, Georgia; housing projects in the North leased apartments to both Negro and white families. Negro hospitals, schools, playgrounds, and other public facilities were built by the Public Works Administration in the South, while Negroes everywhere obtained relief and employment under the Works Progress Administration. By 1939, a million Negroes were earning their livelihood in the WPA.

The National Youth Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps did much for Negro youths. These agencies encouraged them to learn trades and to continue their education. They also furnished young Negroes with a variety of health services. Though the CCC maintained strictly segregated camps, it provided employment for some 200,000 Negro boys during its lifetime.

UNIONS AND EMPLOYMENT

The "Jobs-for Negroes" movement and the various New Deal work programs created numerous employment opportunities, but discriminatory union policies continued to plague the Negro worker. Negro leaders found it far more difficult to fight discrimination within the major unions than to induce individual employers to hire Negro workers. The majority of Negro industrial workers were still unorganized when the New Deal began. During the depression, labor unions enforced their racial exclusion policies even more vigorously in order to keep whites employed. Most Negroes, moreover, continued to work at unskilled or semi-skilled jobs and were therefore ineligible for membership in the AFL's crafts unions. Though the passage of the Wagner Act of 1935 breathed new life into the labor movement by giving workers the right to organize and bargain collectively, the statute had little immediate effect upon the unorganized Negro workers. It accentuated their plight even more.

The division of the labor movement into two opposing camps ultimately enlarged the Negro's role in organized labor. In 1935, a militant minority within the American Federation of Labor secured approval for the establishment of a Committee for Industrial Organizations. Led by John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers, the Committee soon began an intensive drive to organize all mass-production workers – unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled – into single industry-wide unions. The consequence was a fight within the AFL between the advocates of craft unionism and those who favored industrial unionism. In 1938, all remaining ties with the AFL were broken when the original CIO was transformed into a permanent Congress of Industrial Organizations.

From the beginning, the CIO's membership policies were more liberal than those prevailing within the AFL. As the CIO proceeded to organize the mass production industries, it brought large numbers of Negroes into the organized labor movement. Negro workers in the steel, meat-packing, automobile, and other major industries profited greatly under the labor contracts that were negotiated. Between 1935 and 1945, union membership among Negroes rose from 180,000 to 1,250,000. At the same time, Negroes grew less suspicious of the unions and became more active in union affairs. According to John Hope Franklin, "a feeling of security and belonging arose among Negro workers that was one of the most significant developments in the direction of their more complete integration into American life."

The increased demand for labor in the nation's defense industries after 1940 promised further gains for Negro workers, but discrimination kept many qualified Negroes out of the defense plants. In June, 1941, A Philip Randolph, Walter White, and other Negro leaders conferred with the President on this issue. The threatening manpower shortage and the wartime upsurge of democratic sentiment presented a unique opportunity for action, and this undoubtedly was sensed by all who were present. To force Roosevelt into positive action against discrimination, Randolph threatened a "March on Washington" of more than fifty thousand Negroes. Though the President and members of his cabinet tried to dissuade Randolph, there is reason to believe that Roosevelt had been hoping for just such pressure to force executive action. In any case, the march was called off in return for Roosevelt's promise to issue an order "with teeth in it" prohibiting discrimination in defense industries and in the government. On June 25, President Roosevelt issued his famous Executive Order 8802 urging that workers in defense industries be employed "without discrimination on account of race, creed, color or national origin." The Order provided for the insertion of an antidiscrimination clause in all government contracts and established a Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) in the Office of Production Management.

It was the FEPC's task to receive and investigate complaints in violation of the Order. In the course of its work, the FEPC uncovered many evidences of discrimination, but it had no power to institute punishment and was not inclined to recommend the cancellation of war contracts. Its very existence, however, and the publicity given to its work, did much to improve the employment status of Negroes. Between 1940 and the end of the war, the number of Negroes employed at skilled jobs doubled, as did the number of semi-skilled Negro workers. According to Robert C. Weaver, the changes that took place in the pattern of Negro employment during the war years "represented more industrial and occupational diversification for Negroes than had occurred in the seventy-five preceding years." These changes were to have a profound effect upon developments following World War II.

CIVIL RIGHTS DURING THE ROOSEVELT ERA

With the New Deal's expanding role as guardian of the national welfare came greater federal concern for denials of equal rights to Negroes. President Roosevelt expressed his administration's philosophy on the race question when he told a Howard University audience in 1936: "As far as it was humanly possible, the Government followed the policy that among American citizens there should be no forgotten men and no forgotten races." He reiterated his sentiments in a message to the NAACP's 1938 Convention when he observed that "no democracy can long survive which does not accept as fundamental to its very existence the recognition of the rights of its minorities."

Though the New Deal was never fully able to equate ideal with practice, it laid the groundwork for later progress in race relations. Interracial relationships in the South began to improve as white Southerners increased their contacts with talented Negro federal officials and as the war against poverty weakened the basis of Southern demagoguery. Despite the President's condemnation of lynching and other forms of anti-Negro lawlessness, Congress failed again in 1935 to enact anti-lynching legislation. Nevertheless, the number of Negroes lynched declined from 281 during the 1920's to 119 during the 1930's. In 1939, the Roosevelt administration took a step of signal importance by creating a Civil Rights Section in the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice. Although this office was able to take action on relatively few of the thousands of complaints it received each year, its establishment led ultimately to the formation of a full Civil Rights Division within the department.

During the Roosevelt years, the Supreme Court continued to expand its role as protector of citizenship rights. As indicated earlier (see page 100), the "white primary" was invalidated in 1944 after a succession of cases. The question of equal protection in the field of education also came before the courts during this period. To avoid setting up duplicate professional or graduate schools for Negro students, some of the Southern states provided Negroes with scholarships to schools outside the South. In 1935, the Maryland Court of Appeals declared that this practice constituted a denial of equal protection. When a similar question was presented to the Supreme Court in 1938 in the landmark case of *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*, the Court held that an out-of-state tuition scholarship was no substitute for equal treatment within the state.

As a result of the appeals of Negro defendants against official abuse, the Supreme Court expanded the protection given all citizens in their relations with the agencies of justice. In 1932, in the first of the famous Scottsboro cases, the Court ruled that the failure of an Alabama court "to make an effective appointment of counsel" to defendants who were "surrounded by hostile sentiment" and "put in peril of their lives" was a denial of due process within the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment. In its second Scottsboro decision in 1935, the Court set aside a conviction on the grounds that Negroes had deliberately been excluded from the jury. After 1945, the Supreme Court moved from a position of equivocation to one of vigorous determination not to become an instrument of state-supported prejudice.

Social and Cultural Trends

The world seemed little changed to those who lived within the Negro ghettos of the thirties. Though complex forces had begun to reshape Negro life, their effects were not always readily discernible. There had been a political awakening, but the return to politics did little to alter the conditions under which the Negro masses lived. The New Deal had given Negroes relief and some recovery, but not thorough-going reform. Industrial unionism had seemed even more promising, but its promises were slow in coming; the union badge opened few new doors for the Negro and solved few of his old problems. Though the Supreme Court was less ambivalent in the area of civil rights, it had not yet discarded the doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in favor of full citizenship and equality. Despite the progress that had been made since Emancipation, the Negro world was still a world apart from the rest of the community.

Negroes continued to devote much of their attention to educational concerns. Though financial difficulties plagued the schools, some gains were made. Declining philanthropic aid to Negro schools forced the public authorities to assume more responsibility for their welfare. The enrollment of Negro children increased, but it did not keep pace with the enrollment of white children. Negroes were still finding better educational facilities in the Northern cities where there was a large taxable wealth and where schools could be operated at lower per capita costs due to the concentration of population. On the other hand, some of the Northern communities had established separate schools for Negroes. Few states followed the precedent set in 1900 by New York when it prohibited separate schools for Negroes. In many Northern cities, moreover, *de facto* school segregation was an inevitable result of restrictions in housing.

Educational conditions in the South remained distinctly inferior. The South had always found it difficult to support a dual system of education and, when expenditures were cut during the depression, appropriations for Negro schools were reduced disproportionately. In many areas of the South, a shorter school year for Negro students than for whites was mandated, and salaries given Negro teachers were invariably lower than those given white teachers with equal preparation and duties. Though a United States Court of Appeals ruled in 1940 that a double salary standard based on race was unconstitutional, the program of salary equalization moved slowly through the South.

Despite the fact that Negro colleges suffered severe shortages of funds, some progress was made in higher education. Public support for Negro institutions grew steadily as states and cities established new Negro colleges and assumed the administration of some that could no longer be run on a self-supporting basis. After 1933, many of the older Negro colleges were forced to give up their separate identities and consolidate their resources. In 1943, 33 colleges organized the United Negro College Fund to combine their fund-raising activities and to promote a more equitable distribution of the funds received.

Three important trends in higher education for Negroes became noticeable during the thirties and forties: there was an increase in the number of Negroes attending college in the North; there were more Negroes being appointed to the presidencies of Negro colleges in the South; and there were more Negroes on the faculties of Northern colleges and universities. Pressure was brought on the Southern states to provide professional and graduate faculties as Negroes increasingly sought advanced training. As indicated earlier (see page 117), the question of equal facilities in higher education first came before the Supreme Court during this period.

Their continuing isolation compelled Negro Americans to rely more and more upon their own social institutions for self-expression, recognition, and leadership. The only institution fully controlled by Negroes, the church remained the focal point of community life. It served as the clearing house for innumerable social and cultural activities and was used to promote many community-wide interests. By 1950, there were thirty-four all-Negro denominations with a membership in excess of five million, more than 35,000 churches, and church property valued at $200,000,000.

The Negro press performed a vital function within the separated Negro world. Only a few white newspapers regularly printed items of special interest to the Negro; their editorial policies and their predilection for news of crimes committed by Negroes offended their Negro readers. Consequently, communities with large Negro populations frequently supported newspapers of their own. Some local Negro newspapers, such as the *Baltimore Afro-American* and the *Houston Informer*, established newspaper chains, while several news-gathering agencies were organized to provide local papers with wider coverage. During and following this period, a number of monthly and quarterly magazines—among them *The Negro Digest*, *Ebony*, *Color*, *Headlines*, and *Sepia Hollywood*—began publication. Together with the official journals of fraternities, sororities, professional associations, and protest groups, these magazines supplemented the newspapers' coverage of Negro affairs. Following World War I, there was a steady increase in the number of Negro newspapers and periodicals. By 1956, more than 350 Negro newspapers, magazines and journals were being issued on a regular weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis. They comprised an extensive mass media for the Negro world.

There was a tremendous growth in the Negro professional class during the Roosevelt years. The enclaved Negro population required professionals to perform a variety of essential services, and this undoubtedly stimulated the growth that took place. Teachers, clergymen, physicians, dentists, attorneys, social workers, and recreational leaders constituted the most highly-trained group within the Negro world. Through their professional associations, they exerted considerable influence on Negro affairs and on developments within the larger community.

The New Deal years witnessed the emergence of a substantial Negro middle class composed primarily, although not exclusively, of people in the professions. The growth of this class intensified social stratifications within the Negro world. Nevertheless, the range of wealth and occupation within the Negro community remained small. The great mass of Negro industrial workers continued to constitute the broad base upon which the social structure rested. According to a number of observers, there were more contacts between the various segments of the Negro population and their white counterparts as the Negro class structure began to approximate that of the larger community. Though such contacts did not cause racial identities and interests to disappear, they helped to create a more favorable climate for wholesome intergroup relationships. Perhaps it was this climate, and the forces that produced it, that enabled the New Negro Movement of the twenties to continue.

The Enduring Renaissance

Artists, writers, and entertainers were particularly hard hit by the depression crisis. Fortunately, the New Deal's relief projects enabled many talented individuals to carry on their work. The Federal Theater Project and the Federal Writers' Project were especially helpful to young Negroes just beginning their careers. These agencies also gave considerable assistance to those who had already gained their reputations. A number of the "Wits" who had figured prominently in the New Negro Movement derived substantial benefits from their employment with these agencies. By the mid-thirties, a second phase of the Harlem Renaissance was clearly under way. It continued through the war years, and is much in evidence today.

The second phase, like the first, gained momentum as young white writers — among them Lillian Smith, Hodding Carter, Henrietta Buckmaster, and Howard Fast — won recognition for their works with Negro themes; and historians such as Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., Howard K. Beale, and Merle Curti began teaching and writing history that dealt more objectively with the Negro. These men and women helped to renew interest not only in the Negro problem but also in the works of Negro writers, artists, and intellectuals.

The Roosevelt years, and those that followed, proved to be years of rich harvest for Negro poets and novelists. Many of the poets of the first period continued to write during the thirties and forties, and a number of new poets appeared on the scene. Prominent among the latter were Melvin B. Tolson, Margaret Walker, and Gwendolyn Brooks. Tolson published numerous poems in magazines and newspapers. Two of his best known poems, "Dark Symphony" and "Libretto for the Republic of Liberia," projected the racial theme into that of world concern for human rights and dignity. According to Margaret Butcher, Tolson's work represented a "strong repudiation of trite traditionalism." Margaret Walker, who wrote "For My People" while on the Chicago Federal Writers' Project, later won the first prize in the Yale University competition for younger poets. Gwendolyn Brooks' volume, *A Street in Bronzeville*, appeared in 1945; in 1950, *Annie Allen* gained for her the distinction of being the first Negro recipient of a Pulitzer prize. Other poets who rose to prominence in the ongoing Harlem Renaissance were Robert Hayden, Owen Dodson, Myron O'Higgins, and M. Carl Holman.

Negroes continued to win fame for prose writings after 1933. Zora Neal Hurston, George W. Henderson, Waters Turpin, William Attaway, Chester Himes, and Ann Petry were among the Negro authors whose works received critical acclaim. Langston Hughes, the "Shakespeare" of the movement's first decade, became the unofficial laureate of its second with the publication of new stories, poetry, and plays. Arna Bontemps' first major work, *God Sends Sunday* (1931), was a vivid portrayal of life in New Orleans and St. Louis. Bontemps delved into historical fiction with *Black Thunder* (1936) and *Drums at Dusk* (1939). He also became a successful writer of short stories and children's books. Bontemps' recent writings, particularly in Negro biography, have brought him added recognition.

Among the most prominent of the young Negro writers in the forties was Richard Wright. His collection of short stories, *Uncle Tom's Children*, appeared in 1938, but the publication of *Native Son* in 1940 put him into the front ranks of the prose writers. *Native Son* portrayed with stark, tragic realism the frustrations of a young Negro living in a large American city. In 1941, Wright published *Twelve Million Black Voices*, a folk history of the American Negro. His *Black Boy* appeared in 1945. A record of Wright's childhood in Mississippi, *Black Boy* realistically depicted life among underprivileged Southern Negroes. Wright's death in 1960 brought to an end a brilliant career in American letters.

As the Harlem Renaissance continued into the post-war years, other Negro authors came into prominence. In 1946, Frank Yerby's *The Foxes of Harrow* became a best seller; this work, as well as others later written by Yerby, was filmed in Hollywood. Ralph Ellison's novel, *The Invisible Man*, won the National Book Award in 1952. Willard Motley's *Knock on Any Door* was an important addition to the literature of social protest, while playwright Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* was a successful drama. James Baldwin and John Killens are today considered outstanding authors of fiction. As a group, the post-war Negro prose writers tended toward escapist themes and works of general social protest. When they dealt with Negro subjects they showed a pronounced disposition to focus on universal, human problems. The theme of race conflict did not disappear from their writings, but was now one among other pressing problems of twentieth-century American life.

In the theater, and later in motion pictures and television, Negro actors and actresses were severely handicapped by limitations imposed by a public which expected Negroes to portray menials. Nevertheless, a few Negro performers achieved renown for major dramatic roles. Among them were Paul Robeson, Hilda Simms, Gordon Heath, Ethel Waters, and Canada Lee. Negroes were more successful in Hollywood but even here they encountered difficulties because of their race. In 1929, the all-Negro picture, *Hallelujah*, was produced. It was well received but it made no noticeable improvement on the status of Negro performers in Hollywood. Though Louise Beavers and Fredi Washington appeared in the film version of Fannie Hurst's *Imitation of Life* in 1934, their roles were not typical of those generally given the Negro. Occasionally, film appearances of such entertainers as Etta Moten, Bill Robinson, Hazel Scott, and Lena Horne were deleted from showings in the South. Negroes in motion pictures continued to portray servants, laborers, or criminals. It was as a servant in *Gone With the Wind* that Hattie McDaniel won the Academy Award in 1939 as the best supporting actress. A quarter of a century elapsed before another Negro, Sidney Poitier, received the award as best actor of the year for his performance in *Lilies of the Field*.

During the thirties and forties, Negroes made greater headway in the light entertainment field than in the theater and motion pictures. Such musicians as Count Basie, Louis Jordan, Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Dizzie Gillespie, and Thelonius Monk made important contributions to the development of modern jazz, while Jimmie Lunceford, Noble Sissle, Duke Ellington and others helped to popularize "sophisticated swing." Billy Rose's production of *The Mikado* at the New York World's Fair in 1939 gave many Negro performers opportunities for employment. Later, his production of *Carmen Jones* brought stardom to both Muriel Rahn and Muriel Smith. Following World War II, many Negroes gained fame as musicians, singers, night-club entertainers, and recording artists.

William Grant Still was the outstanding symphonic composer of the Harlem Renaissance's second phase. His symphonies, *Africa*, *Afro-American Symphony*, and *Symphony in G Minor: Song of a New Race* were performed by many major orchestral societies. Other composers to achieve fame were William L. Dawson, John W. Work, and Warner Lawson. Two Negroes who gained international reputations as conductors were Dean Dixon and Rudolph Dunbar. Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus won acclaim for their interpretive dancing and choreography. Such established Negro concert singers as Marian Anderson, Dorothy Maynor, Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson, and William Warfield drew large audiences throughout the Roosevelt years. A number of new artists appeared on the concert and opera stage after Pearl Harbor; among them were Ann Brown, Todd Duncan, Camilla Williams, Lawrence Winters and Ellabelle Davis. Both Mahalia Jackson and Harry Belafonte achieved fame on the concert stage for their presentations of spirituals, gospel songs, and folk music. Several Negro singers, including Marian Anderson, Robert McFerrin, Mattiwilda Dobbs, and Leontyne Price, have signed contracts with New York's Metropolitan Opera Association.

Several painters and sculptors received recognition during and following the Roosevelt years. Hale Woodruff, Horace Pippin, William Scott, and Jacob Lawrence were the most prominent among the painters. Well-known sculptors were Elizabeth Prophet, Augusta Savage, Selma Burke, and Sargent Johnson.

Negro scholars and scientists made outstanding contributions during this second phase of the Harlem Renaissance. Percy Julian and Ernest E. Just did pioneering work in organic chemistry and cytology respectively. During World War II, Charles R. Drew, a professor of surgery at Howard University, organized a pioneer blood plasma bank in the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. This bank served as a model for those subsequently operated by the American Red Cross and by various organizations in Europe. E. Franklin Frazier, a leading sociologist became president of the American Sociological Society and head of the Department of Applied Social Sciences of UNESCO. Charles S. Johnson, president of Fisk University, was widely recognized for his sociological writings. Carter G. Woodson, founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, carried on his pathfinding work in Negro history until his death in 1950, while Charles H. Wesley, Rayford W. Logan, Benjamin Quarles, Lorenzo Greene, A. A. Taylor, and John Hope Franklin gained recognition as historians. W. E. B. DuBois continued his historical studies. His *Black Reconstruction*, published in 1935, presented a wealth of new materials on that turbulent era that clearly revealed the author's Marxist leanings. Disillusioned in his later years by America's failure to extend equality to the Negro, DuBois became more active in leftist circles. Shortly before he renounced his American citizenship in 1961, he applied formally for membership in the Communist party. He lived in Ghana from the fall of 1961 until his death in 1963.

The Negro's achievements in the sports world are not, strictly speaking, part of the story of the New Negro Movement. There are, nevertheless, important reasons for considering them here. Negro athletes have had a tremendous impact upon the popular image of the Negro in America and have provided the Negro community with some of its outstanding success stories. Sports seemed to offer Negroes a short and exciting route to the riches and recognition that were denied them in other fields. Negro athletes have frequently spoken of the personal fulfillment they achieved through sports. This was cogently expressed by Althea Gibson when she called her biography *I Always Wanted To Be Somebody*.

Since the mid-thirties, Negroes have made startling advances in athletic competitions. Jesse Owens, the track star, was the outstanding performer in the 1936 Olympic games. Joe Louis' twelve-year reign as the world's heavyweight king made him a celebrated American hero. Since Louis' retirement in 1949, his crown has been worn by five successors, four of them Negro. After 1947, the year that Jackie Robinson broke into organized baseball, the color bar was lowered not only in the national game but in other realms of sport. In 1957, Althea Gibson won the Wimbledon international matches, the National Clay Courts competition in Chicago, and the Nationals at Forest Hills. In 1958, she repeated her Wimbledon success, taking both the international singles and doubles championships. In the 1960 Olympics, Wilma Rudolph, winner of three gold medals, was the outstanding individual performer. Willie

Mays, the famed center fielder, Hayes Jones, the track champion, Wilt Chamberlain, the basketball "pro," and Jimmy Brown, the football star, figure prominently in the sports world today.

American culture is a synthesis of diverse contributions made by its many ethnic groups. Though shamefully ignored, the "color minorities" – American Indians, Spanish-speaking Americans, and American Negroes – have left an indelible imprint upon American civilization. Increasing integration in American life promises a prolonged Harlem Renaissance, one that will provide future generations with ample evidence of the Negro's artistic, literary, and intellectual potentialities.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Americans had been surprised and shocked in 1914 when Europe plunged into war. Though the outbreak of war in 1939 was no less shocking, its coming had not been unexpected. Many had seen the writing on the wall long before Germany's attack on Poland precipitated World War II.

Like their countrymen, Negroes had watched international developments after 1930 with growing alarm. They had sympathized with China as that beleagured nation strained to halt the tide of Japanese imperialism. Profoundly shaken by Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, Negroes formed a number of organizations to register their protest and raise funds for the Negro victims of Mussolini's aggression. American Negroes were distinctly anti-Franco after the Spanish Civil War began in 1936 and some went to Spain to fight with the Loyalists in this first war against fascism.

Though the Negro world spurned all the varieties of totalitarianism that flourished during the thirties, it reserved most of its hatred for the Nazis. Negroes had early perceived the dangerous implications of the Nazis' Aryan doctrines. Those who had read *Mein Kampf* knew of Hitler's contempt for their race and were aware that this was but one manifestation of his racist philosophy. The incivility shown to American Negroes participating in the 1936 Berlin Olympics dramatized the meaning of Nazism for the Negro masses. Max Schmeling's defeat of Joe Louis that year seemed to symbolize the threat which hung over America from abroad, just as Louis' later defeat of Schmeling was to symbolize democracy's ultimate triumph over Nazism. The Nazi persecution of the Jews provided ample evidence of the fate awaiting millions of Negroes should the German racists realize their goal of global conquest.

As America became the "arsenal of democracy," concern arose regarding the extent to which Negroes would be allowed to serve in the armed forces. When hostilities began in Europe, there were fewer than 5,000

Negro soldiers and a dozen Negro officers in segregated units of the regular Army. Anxiety lessened somewhat with the passage of the Selective Service Act in September, 1940, since the act forbade discrimination in the drafting and training of men. The next month, the War Department issued a statement to clarify its policies on the Negro. Though Negroes were to be received in the army on the general basis of the proportion of the Negro population of the country, they were to be organized in segregated regiments; Negro units already staffed by white officers were to receive no additional Negro officers other than medical officers and chaplains. Negroes were infuriated by this statement and began to protest loudly. The appointment of Negroes to key positions in the wartime federal agencies and the promotion of the first Negro, Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., to the rank of brigadier general did little to assuage the hurt. Negroes were convinced that America was again arming herself to fight for democracy by renouncing basic democratic practices.

As compared with World War I, there was less discrimination during World War II in the administration of the Selective Service and in the armed forces generally. In October, 1940, the War Department announced that it would permit Negroes to qualify for reserve commissions in the same officer candidates schools and classes as were attended by whites. At the same time, senior ROTC units were established at several Negro colleges. Thereafter, there was a steady increase in the number of Negroes commissioned as army officers. Except for officers trained as pilots, Negro army officers received their commissions in non-segregated camps. In April, 1942, the Navy and the Marines began to accept Negro enlistments for general service. After 1944, Negroes were commissioned as officers in the Navy, the Marines, and the Coast Guard. Crews were integrated in the Merchant Marine and four Negro captains commanded vessels. During the war, eighteen Liberty ships were named for outstanding American Negroes. Another reform was attempted in the First Army late in the war when Negro platoons were experimentally integrated with white platoons to fight on German soil. Though the experiment proved successful, the practice was discontinued once the war was over.

The morale of the Negro troops was a problem throughout the war. Discrimination in the armed forces and by white civilians plagued Negroes in uniform and gave the Japanese and Germans a useful propaganda theme. At many military posts, inferior housing and segregated facilities caused numerous clashes and some serious riots. In July, 1944, the War Department issued an order forbidding discrimination in the use of military transportation and recreational facilities but the order provoked bitter Southern protests and was therefore never strictly enforced.

More than 1,000,000 Negro men and women served in all the branches of the armed forces during World War II. In Europe, half the Transportation Corps was composed of Negroes. In addition, there were twenty-two Negro combat units and two air units. The 332nd Fighter Group, organized by Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a son of the brigadier general, flew more than 3,000 missions and destroyed almost 300 enemy planes. Eighty-eight of its pilots, including Col. Davis, received the Distinguished Flying Cross. Heavy fighting cost the all-Negro 92nd Division some 3,000 fatalities. The men of the Division won sixty-five Silver Stars, 162 Bronze Star medals, and 1,300 Purple Hearts.

Negroes fought throughout the Pacific. The main Negro combat unit, the 93rd Division, first saw action at Bougainville in the Solomons. It subsequently fought against the Japanese in the Treasury Islands, the Dutch East Indies, and the Phillipines. Other units saw action at Okinawa, Guadalcanal, and the New Georgia Islands. Dorie Miller, a Navy messman at Pearl Harbor, won the Navy Cross for manning a machine gun and shooting down two Japanese planes. Negro Marines and Seabees particularly distinguished themselves during the war in the Pacific.

On the home front, Negroes gave generous support to the war effort through their participation in war bond drives and civil defense. Their work in the various government agencies, in the defense plants, and on the farms provided the men in combat with essential materials and services. Many Negro entertainers toured the camps and joined with the rest of the Negro community in supporting the work of the servicemen's organizations.

Despite the gains that were made in race relations during the war years, there were several violent interracial clashes. Serious conflicts developed as large numbers of Negroes moved to urban areas in the North and West to work in the defense industries. Particularly acute was the housing problem. Negro families moving into white residential communities encountered resentment, bombings, and forced evictions. Race clashes occurred in New York, Los Angeles, Mobile, and Beaumont. A most disastrous riot took place in Detroit on June 20, 1943. More than 50,000 Negroes and 450,000 whites had come to the city to work in the defense industries centered there. An altercation triggered thirty hours of violence which cost the lives of twenty-five Negroes and nine whites. The outburst was so destructive of life and property that President Roosevelt, after proclaiming a state of emergency, sent 6,000 soldiers to patrol the city.

Negro leaders were disheartened by the nation's failure to suppress, at least for the duration of the conflict, its racist doctrines and practices. As Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. has observed, "The national folkway of discrimination constituted a spectacular contradiction to the official rhetoric of freedom." At the beginning of the First World War, Negroes had been hopeful that progress would be made in their struggle for equal rights; their faith was rudely shaken by their experiences during and following that war. Consequently, when World War II began, Negro leaders were suspicious of the white man's good intentions and felt less constrained to point out the disparities between fighting for the four freedoms abroad while being denied these freedoms at home. Mrs. Roosevelt voiced the mood of the Negro world early in the war years when she said that "the nation cannot expect colored people to feel that the United States is worth defending if the Negro continues to be treated as he is now."

During World War II, Negro leaders were determined that the libertarian pledges of the war would apply to American Negroes as well as to Hitler's victims in Europe. As has been seen, their demand for equality of opportunity in employment resulted in the establishment of the FEPC. This agency, and the wartime shortage of labor, helped to create expanded economic opportunities for Negroes. As migrants from the South flocked to the urban centers of the North and West, local leaders helped them find better homes, jobs, and educational facilities for their children. At the same time, the campaign waged against segregation in the armed forces permitted Negroes to better serve their country. Though the assertion of Negro rights increased racial tensions and was partly responsible for the shameful race riots that occurred during the war years, Negroes more than succeeded in maintaining the pace of the thirties in their fight for equality.

Throughout the war, Negroes sought to influence the course of postwar adjustment by calling for a lasting peace based on justice without regard to race. They hoped that the formation of a new international organization would not only accomplish this goal, but would bring economic security and an opportunity for truly creative living to all the world's depressed minorities. An effective international agency, Negroes believed, could exert moral pressure to end the discrimination, segregation, and oppression that had been imposed upon them in America. Thus, they eagerly awaited the San Francisco conference that had been called for April, 1945, to adopt a United Nations charter.

The death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt a few weeks before the conference cast a pall over Negro America. Though some Negroes had deserted Roosevelt in the 1944 elections, the vast majority still regarded him as "their best President since Lincoln." Roosevelt's death and the end of the war brought an epochal twelve years to a close. For the first time since Reconstruction, American Negroes had lived through an era of slow, steady progress without major reversals in their fortune. They had felt the wrath of the depression, but they had also witnessed a political resurgence, increasing employment opportunities, a continuing cultural renaissance, and significant gains in their social status. They stood on the threshold of a new era in human history – an era abundantly endowed with hazards and potentialities. Though apprehensive about the future, Negroes could look back upon the Roosevelt years as a period during which they moved significantly closer to the American dream of freedom and equality.

Chapter 10

THE QUEST FOR EQUALITY:

1945-1964

The Second World War threw a potent catalyst into the chemistry of race relations. Though the struggle for Negro rights remained largely a private affair, wartime developments dulled some of the razor-sharp edges of racism in America. The government's action against discrimination in employment and in the armed forces was a significant breakthrough which enabled Negroes to improve their status. As Negroes continued their migration to Northern and Western urban centers, they found new economic and educational mobility, new drives for assertion, and new political leverage. The mingling of Negroes and whites in the defense plants and on military posts caused tensions, but it also helped to promote mutual respect and understanding. Of fundamental importance to the Negro world was the impact of the ideological struggle between democracy and dictatorship. The battle against totalitarianism put a special focus on human rights and freedom and increased the nation's awareness of its democratic heritage. Thus, a climate was created in which progress could be made after 1945.

The forces for change that had arisen from the war were scarcely perceptible to Negro leaders and their liberal white allies in 1945. Severely limited by the lack of resources, the various protest organizations had made relatively little headway in altering the conditions which nourished racial prejudice. As long as the federal government maintained the hands-off attitude that had prevailed since Reconstruction, these organizations could do little more than to fight a defensive action. Their strategy had been to rally against specific grievances, such as lynchings, racial restrictions within the armed forces, and discrimination in employment.

At the end of the war, the NAACP decided to concentrate its efforts in the areas of housing and education. These were understandable priorities, but they left other basic issues—the right of Negroes to vote, equal access to public facilities, the administration of justice—for the future when, hopefully, the association's resources would improve. Few Negro leaders could be persuaded in 1945 that a breakthrough toward equality would soon occur; the difficulties of post-war "reconversion" and sporadic racial "incidents" seemed to presage another Red Summer rather than a move toward equality. These leaders, of course, could not foresee that continuing industrialization and technological progress would bring further migration from the South; that prosperity would continue at least through the first post-war decade; and that Negroes would therefore continue to make substantial economic and social progress. Nor could they anticipate that international developments—the emergence of the United Nations, the outbreak of the Cold War, the rise of independent African and Asian states—would have a tremendous impact on America's democratic ideals and cause national concern over traditional patterns of race relations. There was, finally, little to indicate that the new President, Harry S. Truman, would soon launch a transformation in the government's attitude toward the Negro.

THE FAIR DEAL

Harry S. Truman was a comparative unknown when he was called upon to fill the place left vacant by the death of President Roosevelt. On the record, he seemed an old-time political "pro" with a pronounced loyalty to his early associates, his party, and his President. Those who knew him personally held him in high esteem; they especially valued his sense of decency, his warmth, and his power of decision. Though there were rumors that he had belonged to the Ku Klux Klan, the fact was that he had led the fight against the Klan at the height of its power in Missouri. During his first months in office, his preoccupation with international affairs and the successful conclusion of the war prevented any thoroughgoing formulation of domestic policies. It was therefore not until the fall of 1945 that the President's legislative program was announced.

On September 6, 1945, President Truman sent a 21-point message on domestic affairs to Congress. This message, and the six that followed, detailed his plans for reconversion and laid out the main elements of what was to be called the "Fair Deal" after 1948: full employment legislation, public housing, farm price supports, the nationalization of atomic energy, health insurance, and an updating of the New Deal legislation on conservation, social security, and minimum wages. Among these messages was a strong proposal urging the heart of the Negro legislative demands of this period—an antilynching bill, the elimination of the [illegible] tax, and a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. Congress, however, failed to enact these measures, and on June 30, 1946, against the President's wishes, the FEPC was terminated.

Then, on December 5, 1946, President Truman issued an Executive Order creating the President's Committee on Civil Rights. This Committee was to investigate the condition of civil rights and offer proposals for improvement. In his *Memoirs*, Truman explained his reasons for issuing the Order:

> I took this action because of the repeated anti-minority incidents immediately after the war in which homes were invaded, property was destroyed, and a number of innocent lives were taken. I wanted to get the facts behind these incidents of disregard for individual and group rights which were reported in the news with alarming regularity, and to see that the law was strengthened, if necessary, so as to offer adequate protection and fair treatment to all of our citizens.

In October, 1947, the Committee's report, *To Secure These Rights*, was issued. It contained a memorable analysis of personal freedom in America. It noted areas of progress but was critical of the slow pace in eliminating racial and religious discrimination. Among its comprehensive and far-reaching recommendations were a permanent commission on civil rights, a mandatory FEPC, antilynching legislation, the elimination of the poll tax, and new federal legislation to correct discrimination in voting and the administration of justice. Outside the South, the reaction to the report was most favorable. The *New York Herald Tribune* said:

> What gives the report its powerful impact is not the novelty of its proposals but the way in which it wraps all these issues up in a single program and lays it before the American people with the imperative of finding that the time for action is now.

In a special message to Congress on February 2, 1948, the President urged that the Committee's recommendations be enacted into law. According to Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "This attempt to realize the promises of the Declaration of Independence for all Americans, regardless of race or color, represented Truman's boldest initiative in the domestic field."

President Truman took several other steps to promote racial equality. In 1946, he appointed a committee to investigate the problem of higher education. The committee recommended the elimination of inequalities and the abandonment of discrimination in colleges and universities. Another committee, appointed in 1948 to study the problem of segregation in the armed forces, proposed a number of measures by which integration could be achieved. On July 26, 1948, President Truman issued an Executive Order nullifying "separate but equal" recruitment, training, and service. The following year the armed forces began to move toward complete integration and there were very few incidents to mar the transition. On the same day that desegregation was ordered in the armed services, the President issued Executive Order 9980. This Order proclaimed that the federal government would continue its policy of hiring personnel "without discrimination because of race, color, religion, or national origin." A Fair Employment Board was established within the federal Civil Service Commission to implement the Order.

President Truman's legislative efforts on behalf of civil rights met with Congressional disapproval. Though his Orders and proposals helped to improve the Negro's status, they aroused substantial opposition against the President within the Southern wing of the Democratic party. During the 1948 campaign, diehard Southern Democrats formed the States Rights Democratic party (better known as the "Dixiecrats") in opposition both to the Democratic party's civil rights platform and to Truman's candidacy. The Dixiecrats failed to prevent Truman's election; their efforts, moreover, confirmed the allegiance of Negroes to the Democratic party. Nevertheless, the Eighty-first Congress, which was controlled by the Democrats, duplicated the performance of the Republican Eightieth Congress in thwarting the President's legislative program for civil rights. In both Congresses, the coalition of Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans remained steadfast in its support of states' rights over human rights.

Though President Truman later criticized some of the methods used by the protest groups, he played a decisive role in the post-war crusade for civil rights. He put the moral and political force of the presidency squarely behind equality and, in doing so, he established a pattern for his successors to follow. As John P. Roche has observed: "The genie was out of the bottle: the issue of Negro rights which had been successfully depoliticized since Reconstruction was now sharply and irretrievably injected into the national conscience and onto the national, and local, political stages."

Expanding Civil Rights

After 1948, the Negro's progress toward equality accelerated rapidly. This was attributable to a number of complex factors, two of which were of signal importance. The battle for full equality gained a new dimension as Negroes themselves took up the burden of the conflict. Northern Negroes rather than white liberals began to dominate in the leadership circles of the principal interracial protest groups, while in the South, Negroes were more inclined to protest against racism. The decline of cotton agriculture and the rise of manufacturing helped to improve the Southern Negro's economic position and gave him new leverage within the civil rights movement. As group identification heightened in the South, Negroes increasingly resorted to group action. They were thus able to join with the Northern Negroes in a nationwide assault against racial discrimination.

A second major change, and doubtless the more significant, was in the federal government's attitude toward the Negro. Since 1945, state and local government units, particularly in the North and West, have been effective sources of change in American race relations. It is clear, however, that the federal government's intervention was the decisive factor in extending to the Negro his birthright of freedom. During and following the Truman administration, the federal judiciary expanded its role as guardian of civil rights and became the principal federal instrument in the Negro's quest for racial justice. The federal executive continued to play an important part in this struggle, while the Congress, in which Southerners exercised their greatest power, lagged far behind the other two branches. There is a paradox in the judiciary's role in the evolution of American democracy: of the three branches, the judiciary is the least democratic since federal judges are subject neither to limited terms nor to periodic elections. Yet, the federal judiciary has unquestionably led the other two branches in the crusade for civil rights.

Housing

The first major breakthrough in the NAACP's post-war legal campaign came in 1948 when the Supreme Court, in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, effectively destroyed the restrictive covenant, a legal device which sustained segregation in private housing. A restrictive covenant required a real-estate purchaser to accept as a condition of sale a restriction on his right to resell the property to a member of a proscribed minority group. This was not strictly a private agreement since it was enforceable, usually by injunctive procedures, within the state courts or within the federal courts if the property was located in Washington, D. C. If a covenant were violated, the courts could intervene to nullify the sale. In the Shelley case, the Supreme Court declared restrictive covenants to be unenforceable in the state courts; in a companion case, they were made unenforceable within the federal courts. While such covenants are not necessarily illegal—they are still being used to prevent the sale of property to Negroes, Jews, Puerto Ricans, Asians, and members of other minority groups—they are no longer legally enforceable.

Following the Shelley case, the federal government began to shift its housing policy from one of actually perpetuating discrimination to "neutrality." After February 15, 1950, the Federal Housing Administration discontinued insuring mortgages on homes on which restrictive covenants were filed. President Eisenhower recognized the need for executive action in public housing when, on January 25, 1954, he announced to Congress his intention to "take steps to insure that families of minority groups displaced by urban redevelopment operations have a fair opportunity to acquire adequate housing." The federal executive, he declared, would prevent the dislocation of such families through the misuse of slum-clearance programs and would "encourage adequate mortgage financing for the construction of new housing for such families on good, well-located sites." In a series of decisions in state and federal courts, segregation in federally-aided public housing projects was held to violate the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. Such segregation declined markedly thereafter; nevertheless, federal assistance in the form of loans, grants, and insurance and mortgage guarantees still went to builders and lenders who discriminated against Negro applicants.

Then, on November 20, 1962, President Kennedy issued an Executive Order prohibiting discrimination in federally-assisted housing. This Order committed the government to a policy of using its resources to end such discrimination. Though the Order's immediate effect will probably be small—its principal impact will be on new housing construction—its long-range effect should be very significant.

By 1963, more than ten states and fifty-five cities had barred discrimination in some sector of the housing market. Ten states and three cities—including both New York State and New York City—had adopted laws applying to privately financed as well as government-aided housing. At the same time, hundreds of "fair housing" groups had been organized in many sections of the country to create housing opportunities in formerly segregated communities and to maintain the stability of newly integrated areas.

Employment

During the Roosevelt years, Americans learned that government action could have a profound effect on both the economy and the social order. With regard to discrimination in employment, it became clear that the government could exert considerable influence by eliminating discriminatory practices within the civil service and by withholding contracts from firms practicing racial or religious discrimination. After the federal FEPC was terminated in 1946, these methods were prescribed in a series of Executive Orders issued by Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy to reduce discrimination in employment.

In December, 1951, following the outbreak of the Korean crisis, President Truman issued Executive Order 10308 which created the Committee on Government Contract Compliance. In 1953, President Eisenhower replaced this committee with his own Committee on Government Contracts and appointed Vice-President Nixon as its chairman. Authorized to receive all complaints of discrimination in employment against government contractors, the Committee would forward each complaint to the federal agency holding the contract with directions to investigate the charges and take appropriate action. Furthermore, it encouraged the appointment of contract compliance officers within each contracting federal agency. By 1960, there were some 1,000 federal employees engaged in compliance activities.

With regard to discrimination within the federal civil service, President Truman, in 1948, established a Fair Employment Board within the Civil Service Commission to investigate charges brought by civilian employees. In 1955, President Eisenhower replaced the Board with a Committee on Government Employment Policy. One of the new Committee's functions was to review complaints and render advisory opinions. By 1961, it had received over a thousand complaints, most of which were settled on the department or agency level. Only 225 cases were referred for review and advisory opinion and, of these, only 33 involved the Committee in conflict with a federal department or agency. In each case the Committee's recommendations were followed.

During the 1960 conventions, both major political parties adopted strong civil rights platforms calling for equal employment opportunities. In August, 1961, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, an organization representing some fifty civil rights groups headed by Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, presented to President John F. Kennedy its "Proposals for Executive Action to End Federally Supported Segregation and Other Forms of Racial Discrimination." This report urged the withholding of all federal funds to state and local governments and to private institutions until assurances were given that the funds would be spent in a nondiscriminatory manner. This principle had been established during World War II with regard to government contracts; the Leadership Conference now sought its extension to other fields. The civil rights groups wanted sanctions imposed for refusals to comply.

In March, 1961, President Kennedy combined the functions of the Committee on Government Employment Policy and the Committee on Government Contracts when he created the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. In issuing the merger order, the President declared:

> I have dedicated my Administration to the cause of equal opportunity in employment by the government or its contractors. . . . I have no doubt that the vigorous enforcement of this order will mean the end of such discrimination.

He emphasized the need for affirmative action on the part of all government departments and agencies, not simply by the staff of the Committee. Unlike its predecessors, the new Committee was given the authorization to investigate complaints, issue recommendations and orders, and require a reconsideration of final decisions by department and agency heads. The Order creating the Committee mandated the inclusion of a non-discriminatory clause in all government contracts. The Committee was given the authority to order a contracting federal agency to terminate a contract with a non-compliant contractor and to declare such a contractor ineligible for further government contracts. Reports on the cooperation of contractors and labor unions are made periodically to the President.

In the area of federal employment, the President's Committee, in cooperation with the Civil Service Commission, has taken the federal recruitment program directly to Negro colleges and universities. As a result, the number of Negroes in the middle and upper grades of the federal civil service has been substantially increased.

At the present time, more than 30 states have fair employment practice laws, most of which are regarded as enforceable. New York State launched this phase of the FEPC movement in 1945 when its governor, Thomas E. Dewey, signed the Ives-Quinn bill. A number of states and cities have established commissions to eliminate discriminatory employment practices and to administer fair employment laws. The New York State Commission for Human Rights, and the New York City Commission on Human Rights, are perhaps the best known of these agencies. Like their federal forerunner, they use persuasion, mediation, and conciliation to achieve their goal. They put the prestige of the law on the side of the employees by controlling well-defined actions of individuals. By opposing discrimination in referrals handled by employment agencies, including the federally-supported state employment services, state commissions have opened up white collar and professional job opportunities to Negroes for the first time.

Travel

Segregation in public transportation, mandated by state laws or by interstate carriers acting in accordance with local customs, has been more bitterly resented by Negroes than most other forms of segregation. Congress' power to "regulate commerce . . . among the several states" and the Interstate Commerce Commission's authority to prohibit "undue or unreasonable prejudice or disadvantage" have been important instruments in eliminating discriminatory practices in the use of travel facilities.

In 1941, the first of a series of decisions was made to end segregation in both interstate and intrastate transportation when the Supreme Court ruled in the Mitchell case. Arthur Mitchell, the Negro Congressman from

Illinois, had purchased a first-class ticket on a railroad from Chicago, Illinois, to Hot Springs, Arkansas. When the train entered Arkansas he was forced to move to a second-class car since there was no first-class car specifically designated for Negroes. Mitchell complained to the Interstate Commerce Commission, but the Commission ruled against him. The Supreme Court, however, unanimously agreed that Mitchell had been denied equality of treatment within the purview of the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887. Five years later, the Supreme Court, in *Morgan v. Virginia*, set aside a Virginia segregation statute on the grounds that it "materially affects interstate commerce." In 1950, the Court held that "the denial of dining services to any passenger . . . subjects him to a prohibited disadvantage." It further declared that "curtains, partitions, and signs emphasize the artificiality of the difference in treatment which serves only to call attention to a racial classification of passengers holding identical tickets and using the same public dining facilities."

After the 1954 Supreme Court decisions in the school segregation cases, both the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Supreme Court began to strike down the "separate but equal" doctrine as it applied to public transportation. In 1955, the Commission ruled that segregation of passengers on railroads or in terminals subjects them to undue prejudice or disadvantage in violation of the Interstate Commerce Act. The next year, the Supreme Court affirmed a lower court ruling that state and local laws requiring segregation on local intrastate buses operating in Montgomery, Alabama, violated the Fourteenth Amendment. When members of the Congress of Racial Equality instituted "Freedom Rides" in May, 1961, to protest the remaining forms of discrimination in transportation, both Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy called upon the Interstate Commerce Commission to adopt stricter regulations against segregation. That September, the Commission prohibited discrimination in seating on interstate buses and segregation within interstate bus terminals.

Two cases decided before the Supreme Court in 1962 brought the drive for equal travel rights virtually to an end. The law had become so clear that the Court was able to announce:

> We have settled beyond question that no State may require segregation of interstate or intrastate transportation facilities. . . . The question is no longer open; it is foreclosed as a litigable issue.

Voting

During and following World War II, Negroes stepped up their efforts to secure the voting rights guaranteed to them by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. It will be recalled that, in 1944, the Supreme Court invalidated the "white primary" in the case of *Smith v. Allwright*. In 1953, in *Terry v. Adams*, the Court finally laid the white primary to rest by declaring that a political club which merely "recommended" candidates for the regular party primary could not exclude persons because of their race or color.

The campaign against the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting also gained momentum following the end of the war. This tax prevented many poverty-stricken persons, white as well as Negro, from exercising the franchise. Not only did the tax have to be paid well in advance of registration, but the receipt for payment had to be presented at the time of registration. These rules, of course, were made in hopes that many Negroes would not be able to fulfill them. During and following the New Deal period, a number of Southern states voluntarily abolished the poll tax. By the end of 1962, only five states required the payment of the tax as a condition for voting. That year, Congress proposed a constitutional amendment to abolish the poll tax in federal elections. In 1964, the proposal became the Twenty-fourth Amendment.

The two civil rights acts passed by Congress in 1957 and 1960 made it possible for more Negroes to vote. The Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first passed since Reconstruction, authorized the federal government to bring civil suits in its own name to obtain injunctive relief where any person is denied or threatened in his right to vote. Before this time, such a remedy was available only to private persons, many of whom could not afford the costs of protracted litigation. The law gave the federal district courts jurisdiction in such cases without requiring that state remedies first be exhausted. Finally, it elevated the civil rights section of the Department of Justice to the status of a division and created the United States Commission on Civil Rights with the authority to investigate allegations of denials of the right to vote. The Civil Rights Act of 1960 authorized the courts to appoint federal referees to safeguard Negro voting rights against proved abuses. This act also made it a federal offense to obstruct court orders by threat of violence. The Civil Rights Commission, ably backed by the Department of Justice under Attorney Generals William P. Rogers and Robert F. Kennedy, earnestly endeavored to use these powers to increase Negro voting.

The registration of Southern Negroes increased during the post-war period. In 1947, some 645,000 Negroes were registered in twelve Southern states. This figure rose to one million by 1952 and exceeded 1.3 million by 1962. Nevertheless, Negroes continued to be dissatisfied with what they considered too limited progress in this field. Negroes attempting to register or vote still encountered hostility, intimidation, and flexible procedures which were invariably used to prevent their exercise of the franchise. In 1962, several civil rights organizations began a two-year drive to increase Negro voter registration.

Following World War II, expanded voting rights in the South and increased political participation in the Northern urban centers gave Negroes added influence in national, state, and local politics. At the same time, the appointment of Negroes to federal positions of responsibility reflected both the trend toward increased voting and the federal government's affirmative policy of equal employment opportunity for Negroes. Today, Negroes hold more elective offices than at any time since 1877.

Equality in Education

During the 1940's, the field of public education emerged as the battleground for an intensive assault upon segregation and the doctrine of "separate but equal." To Negro and white civil rights leaders, a concentrated attack on segregated education seemed wholly justifiable. Few doubted that the dual system of schools in the South had been one of the strongest supports of the ideology of white supremacy; the inferior education given Negro children had contributed substantially to the perpetuation of the myth that Negroes were innately inferior to whites. Furthermore, these leaders were convinced that educational inequalities had helped to maintain economic and political inequalities. They saw education as the key to the Negro's future and were determined to end segregation in the public schools once and for all.

The erosion of segregated education began in the 1930's when the champions of civil rights turned to the courts to break down the barriers in graduate and professional schools. Under the leadership of Nathan R. Margold of the Garland Fund and Charles H. Houston, counsel for the NAACP, the effort first bore fruit in 1938 when the Supreme Court, in the Gaines case, held that provisions for out-of-state scholarships for Negroes were not equivalent when a state school existed for whites. In 1948, in *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma*, the Court extended this ruling to require that equal education for Negroes be offered at the same time that it was provided for any other group within a state.

The next step in the fight for equality in education was to attack the assumption that separate graduate schools for Negroes offered equal professional training. In May, 1946, Heman Marion Sweatt applied for admission to the University of Texas Law School. Although Sweatt was fully qualified, he was denied admission because he was a Negro. The

Texas courts maintained that the state's newly opened law school for Negroes offered him equal opportunities for legal training. The Supreme Court disagreed. On June 6, 1950, the Court, in a unanimous decision, found that the Negro law school could not possibly provide Sweatt with an equal legal education and ordered the University of Texas to admit him to its hitherto all-white law school. This case established the precedent for opening all state-operated graduate and professional schools to Negroes.

On the same day that the Sweatt decision was given, the Supreme Court announced its decision in the case of *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents.* McLaurin, a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma, was required, in accordance with state law, to occupy a separate seat in classroom, library, and cafeteria. The Court found that this denied him the equal protection of the law guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment and ordered the university to rescind the regulations involved. In both the Sweatt and the McLaurin cases, the Court sought to work toward equal rights by literally accepting the doctrine of "separate but equal" and by rejecting separate facilities when they were not in full and exact fact equal.

In 1952, Thurgood Marshall, Houston's successor as counsel to the NAACP, brought to the Supreme Court five cases involving a challenge to segregated public education in elementary and secondary schools. The cases were reargued in 1953. On May 17, 1954, in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the Court unanimously reversed *Plessy v. Ferguson* and, on the basis of the Fourteenth Amendment, outlawed racial discrimination in the public schools. In an opinion written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Court concluded that "in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." That same day, in *Bolling v. Sharpe*, the Court unanimously ruled that segregation in the Washington, D. C., public schools violated the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment. In 1955, the Court called on school authorities to submit plans for desegregation and gave to local federal courts the responsibility of deciding whether the plans constituted "good faith compliance." The Court concluded by ordering action with all deliberate speed. Though these decisions dealt specifically with public schools, their rationale struck a major blow at all segregation laws.

Although considerable progress was made toward integration in the District of Columbia and in the border states, resistance began to harden in such states as Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. This was especially the case after the militantly segregationist

White Citizens' Councils were organized in the fall of 1955 and the spring of 1956. On March 11, 1956, a group of 101 Southern Congressmen issued a manifesto in which they declared that the Supreme Court decision was a "clear abuse of judicial power." Some Southern states enacted legislation to frustrate the Supreme Court ruling. A favorite legislative device was to grant state funds to what were technically private school systems. The pre-Civil War doctrine of nullification, revived by extreme segregationists under the name of "interposition," was hailed as "a perfectly legal means of appeal from the Supreme Court's order." As schools opened in the fall of 1956, fanatics in Mansfield, Texas, in Clinton, Tennessee, and in Sturgis, Kentucky, incited outbreaks of violence.

White resistance to desegregation reached a climax in 1957 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Contending that school integration would threaten public order and safety, Governor Orval Faubus mobilized the Arkansas National Guard to prevent nine Negro students from enrolling in the Central High School. Faubus' open challenge to the Supreme Court compelled President Eisenhower to defend the Constitution. The Governor withdrew the Guard after a face-to-face discussion with the President. When the Negro students attempted to enter the high school, they were mobbed by crowds of angry whites. On September 24, 1957, President Eisenhower sent federal troops into Little Rock. With order restored, the Negro children entered the school.

During the decade following the Supreme Court's decision, slow progress was made in integrating the public schools of the South. Each year, the opening of schools brought new threats, new acts of violence, and new plans to bypass the law of the land. In 1959, Prince Edward County, Virginia, abandoned its public school system in an attempt to prevent school integration; for several years thereafter, while white students attended private schools, the vast majority of the Negro children were without any formal education. In a recent ruling, the Supreme Court held unanimously that Prince Edward County's public schools could not be closed to avoid integration while public schools remained open elsewhere in Virginia.

By May, 1962, only 912 of 3,047 school districts in the South had desegregated their schools. For the most part, integration occurred on a token basis. By May, 1964, the tenth anniversary of the Supreme Court decision, token integration had occurred in all of the Southern states with the exception of Mississippi; by that time, more than 1,100 school districts had desegregated. Nevertheless, only 9.3 percent of the Negro school children in the South were attending classes in desegregated schools.

While efforts were being made to integrate the Southern public schools, civil rights groups began to attack the problem of school segregation in the North and West. Though the educational systems of these areas did not use racially based laws to segregate children, it was charged that *de facto* segregation had resulted from policies which created or perpetuated patterns of segregation. Housing restrictions and the tradition of the "neighborhood" school were thought to be primarily responsible for the segregation that occurred. To accomplish integration, school authorities in New York and a number of other cities have relaxed their neighborhood school policies. In the meantime, Negro communities are continuing to press the attack against policies which resulted in segregated, and in many cases, grossly inferior education.

Since 1954, impressive progress has been made in the integration of higher education in the South. This progress did not occur without incidents of violence. In the fall of 1962, the governor of Mississippi, Ross Barnett, personally refused to admit James Meredith to the University of Mississippi after the federal courts had ordered his admission. On orders from Washington, several hundred federal marshals escorted Meredith to the campus. Violence broke out, resulting in two deaths and numerous injuries. Order was not restored until President Kennedy sent in several thousand federal troops and placed the Mississippi National Guard under federal command. Though he was forced to admit Meredith, Governor Barnett continued to insist that the federal government was unconstitutionally interfering with the state's educational institutions.

In 1963, Governor George Wallace of Alabama took the same action as Barnett in blocking the admission of two Negroes to the state university. He stood aside only after he was requested to do so by a federal official supported by nationalized units of the Alabama National Guard. Months later, Wallace again failed to block the court-ordered desegregation of elementary and secondary schools in Birmingham, Mobile, and Tuskegee. Maintaining that he was acting to forestall rioting and disorder, the governor used state troopers and National Guardsmen to prevent Negro students from enrolling in all-white public schools. He gave way after President Kennedy again federalized the Alabama National Guard. By 1964, state universities in all the southern states had admitted qualified Negro applicants.

THE NEW MILITANCY

After the 1954 school desegregation decisions, the various civil rights groups intensified their efforts to end racial discrimination in America.

Under the leadership of Roy Wilkins, the NAACP – the nation's largest civil rights organization – continued to win notable victories not only in education, but also on issues of transportation, housing, voting, and equal access to public facilities. The NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, headed by Jack Greenberg after Thurgood Marshall's appointment to the U.S. Court of Appeals, has participated in cases involving discrimination in the selection of jurors, in the use of public libraries, pools, and museums, and in public accommodations such as hotels, restaurants, and theaters. At the same time, the National Urban League expanded its work as a professional community service agency. Headed after 1961 by Whitney Young, Jr., the League has done much to advance the economic and social well-being of Negroes through its work in such areas as employment, education, health and welfare, and housing. A number of other organizations – among them the Southern Regional Council, the Southern Education Foundation, the American Negro Labor Council, the National Council of Churches, the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice – have exerted considerable pressure for equal rights for Negroes.

Beginning in 1955, new methods were used to bring about more rapid and dramatic changes in the crusade for civil rights. On December 1, Mrs. Rosa Parks, a Negro seamstress, was arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to move to the rear of a bus. Under the leadership of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., a group of Negroes formed the Montgomery Improvement Association and instituted a boycott of the city's bus system. They hoped to induce the bus company to revise its seating policy and to employ Negro drivers on buses serving predominantly Negro sections. As the economic effects of the boycott began to be felt, the company sought a settlement. However, negotiations soon broke down and legal action was taken to end bus segregation. On June 5, 1956, a federal district court declared that segregation on local public transportation violated the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment. Its decision was upheld in the Supreme Court on November 13. The next month, after a year-long boycott, the company desegregated the entire city transportation system. Shortly thereafter, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a loose alliance of church-oriented groups, was formed to promote nonviolent resistance. Under Dr. King's leadership, the SCLC encouraged Negro communities throughout the South to use the methods successfully employed in desegregating the Montgomery bus system. In Atlanta, Tallahassee, Jacksonville and Birmingham, bus boycotts resulted in desegregation or revised seating rules.

The Montgomery success provided new stimulus for mass action. In many Southern cities, Negroes began to boycott white business establishments where the treatment of Negroes was discriminatory. These businesses soon felt the effect of the boycotts and some began to modify their policies. On February 1, 1960, four students from the Negro Agricultural and Technical College of Greensboro, North Carolina, entered a variety store, made several purchases, and then sat down at the lunch counter to order coffee. They were refused service because they were Negroes. They remained seated until the store closed. Thus began the "sit-ins" and soon the technique was in use throughout the South. With the organization of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and with the support of the older civil rights organizations, the sit-in movement became increasingly effective. As stores with lunch counters began to lose Negro patronage, they either desegregated their facilities or closed them all together. During the height of the sit-ins, Negro college students were arrested by the score and were charged with disorderly conduct and trespassing. Arrests occurred even in such places as state government buildings and public libraries.

By 1962, the sit-in movement had achieved considerable success. As a result of the sit-ins and the negotiations undertaken because of them, the desegregation of lunch counters and other public facilities took place in more than one hundred cities across the country. The Supreme Court has since reversed numerous sit-in convictions, but has left to Congress the question of whether the Fourteenth Amendment's ban on racial discrimination applied to privately-owned places of public accommodation. (See provisions of Civil Rights Act of 1964, p. 149.)

In May, 1961, another protest technique gained national attention when the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which had been organized by James Farmer in 1942, began sending "Freedom Riders" through the South to test segregation laws and practices in interstate transportation and terminal facilities. This technique was not a new one. It was used a century before to challenge segregation in Northern transportation facilities and it was employed by CORE in 1947 to test the effectiveness of the Supreme Court's segregation ban in the Morgan case. Between May and November, 1961, there were at least a dozen "Freedom Rides" involving over a thousand persons. The Freedom Riders encountered little difficulty until they entered Alabama and Mississippi. Then violence marred the venture. In Montgomery, at least 20 persons were injured on May 20 by mob action. The resultant publicity aroused sympathy for the riders throughout the North and even amongst some Southerners. As more teams moved across the South, they were invariably arrested and fined or jailed. By August, more than 290 riders had been jailed in Jackson, Mississippi, alone.

The new militancy quickened the pace of the civil rights revolution and induced large sections of the Negro masses to participate directly in the effort to improve their status. Augmented by new variations — wade-ins at beaches, swim-ins at pools, kneel-ins at churches, and lie-ins at construction projects — the sit-ins, boycotts, and "Freedom Rides" continued throughout 1962. Though some rivalry developed among the newer protest groups, and though these groups partially opposed the older organizations over the matter of direct massive participation, many observers regarded the ensuing competition as healthy. It stimulated many Negro youths to join the newer organizations and persuaded the growing Negro middle class to increase its support of the NAACP and the Urban League.

Meanwhile, new power currents developed among Negroes as the Nation of Islam — the "Black Muslims" — became a complicating factor in the Northern protest movement. This cult first appeared in and around Detroit in 1930 when an itinerant silk merchant, W. D. Fard, began to preach Islamic doctrines and the separation of Negroes from whites. With Fard's disappearance in 1934, Elijah Muhammad assumed leadership of the movement. Although Black Muslim leaders have claimed a membership of a quarter of a million, estimates of its current membership range from 50,000 to 100,000. Like the Garveyites of the 1920's, the Black Muslims champion separateness and deprecate whiteness. Their stated goal is a segregated territory within the United States. They have established mosques, schools, and businesses in the major cities. An iron-disciplined sect, they have renounced alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and gambling. They are enjoined never to carry weapons and always to be polite and pay their bills. Cleanliness in dress and housing is heavily stressed. Scornful of Christianity and critical of Negro leaders seeking integration, the Black Muslim movement represents an extreme, racist reaction to the problems confronting Negroes in America today. "Like the sit-ins and the freedom rides," says Louis E. Lomax, the Black Muslims "are part of the Negro revolt. They are not aimed in the same direction, but they stem from the same unrest. . . ."

BIRMINGHAM AND BEYOND

It was not until 1963, the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, that the Negro's struggle for equality really seared the American conscience. "In 1963," said Martin Luther King, "there arose a great Negro disappointment and disillusionment and discontent." One hundred years of freedom had passed, but the poisons of slavery continued to flow in the nation's bloodstream. Again, as in Lincoln's time, America was engaged in a crucial national debate and, again, the Negro was at its center.

Despairing of moderation, King announced early in 1963 that he would lead a massive assault on the barricades of segregation. He had chosen Birmingham as his target. Birmingham, he said, was "the most thoroughly segregated big city in the United States." He would lead demonstrations there until "Pharaoh lets God's people go."

In April, the Birmingham protest began. Each day, hundreds of Negroes – men, women, and children – paraded cheerfully downtown to demonstrate for equal rights. Awaiting them was Public Safety Commissioner Theophilus Eugene ("Bull") Connor. He arrested the demonstrators wherever they gathered, but still they came. Finally, on May 7, more than 2,000 Negroes poured out of church, broke through the police lines, and marched downtown. Now furious, Connor ordered the fire hoses turned on. With vicious dogs and an armored car menacing the milling throngs, policemen beat their way into the crowds. Streams of high-pressured water swept demonstrators into the streets. By the time the Birmingham demonstrations had ended, some 3,300 Negroes, including King himself, were in jail.

The widely publicized Birmingham clash outraged people the world over and undoubtedly brought millions of white Americans to the Negro's side. Though nonviolence remained the watchword of the protest movement after Birmingham, the movement's intensification brought new violence. In Alabama, "Freedom Walker" William Moore was shot and killed. In Mississippi, Medgar Evers, an NAACP leader, was assassinated in front of his home. Violence broke out in a number of Southern cities. Later in the year, a church bombing in Birmingham took the lives of four Negro girls attending Sunday school, while two other youngsters were shot and killed the same day.

The new wave of militancy that swept across America during the spring and summer of 1963 united millions in a mounting crusade for freedom. In a twelve-week period, the Department of Justice counted 1,412 separate demonstrations. In almost a thousand cities and towns, Negroes and whites demonstrated for an end to segregation in schools and public facilities, for better job opportunities, and for voting rights. Under orders from President Kennedy, the Justice Department now moved swiftly to produce a civil rights bill. In a nationally televised address in June, the President appealed for an end to discrimination against the Negro and said that the United States faced nothing less than a moral crisis, both as a country and as a people. In his message to Congress calling for new civil rights legislation, President Kennedy spoke eloquently on behalf of equality. "No one has been barred on account of his race from fighting or dying for America," he declared.

> There are no "white" and "colored" signs on the foxholes or graveyards of battle. Surely, in 1963, one hundred years after emancipation, it should not be necessary for any American citizen to demonstrate in the streets for the opportunity to stop at a hotel, or to eat at a lunch counter in the very same department store in which he is shopping, or to enter a motion picture house, on the same terms as any other customer. . . . Many Negro children entering segregated grade schools at the time of the Supreme Court decision in 1954 will enter segregated high schools this year, having suffered a loss which can never be regained. Indeed, discrimination in education is one basic cause of the other inequities and hardships inflicted upon our Negro citizens.

To climax a tense summer, the civil rights leaders planned the now famous March on Washington. It proved a spectacular success. On August 28, more than 200,000 Negroes and whites, impatient with the nation's failure to provide full equality for all its citizens, walked from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial. There they heard their leaders – Roy Wilkins, A. Philip Randolph, Whitney Young, Jr., James Farmer, John Lewis. But it was Martin Luther King, Jr., who best articulated their grievances and aspirations. "I have a dream," King cried.

> I have a dream that one day, on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.
>
> I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.
>
> I have a dream that my little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. . . .

Following the March on Washington, there was an inevitable lull in civil rights activity. Though it disheartened some Negroes, the lull was deceptive. A major reassessment had begun, not only within the civil rights groups, but also within the homes and legislatures of America. The civil rights leaders were watching the bill in Congress, for their plans for the future hung squarely on its fate. The lull was unexpectedly prolonged by the assassination of President Kennedy. Profoundly shocked by the President's death, Americans of all races grieved for a great and beloved Chief Executive; they decried the conditions that had bred hatred, bigotry, and violence. Hopes rose within the civil rights movement when the new President, Lyndon B. Johnson, announced his support of the civil rights bill languishing in Congress. "The time has come," he declared in his first message to the national legislature, "for Americans of all races and creeds and political beliefs to understand and respect one another."

It was not until February 10, 1964, almost eight months after its introduction, that the civil rights bill was approved in the House of Representatives. The next month, the expected filibuster began in the Senate. After a 75-day filibuster – the longest in the Senate's history – cloture was invoked on June 10th. The bill was passed in the Senate nine days later and was signed by President Johnson on July 2, 1964.

Hailed by Negro leaders as the strongest, farthest-reaching civil rights measure since 1875, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbade racial discrimination in the use of publicly owned or operated facilities and in most places of public accommodation. It authorized the attorney general to initiate suits or to intervene on behalf of aggrieved persons in school desegregation and other discrimination cases. It prohibited registrars from applying different standards to white and Negro voting applicants. It forbade discrimination in employment, union membership, and federally aided programs. It authorized the establishment of two new federal agencies – a commission to investigate allegations of discrimination by employers or unions, and a Community Relations Service in the Commerce Department to help conciliate racial disputes. Finally, the act extended the life of the Civil Rights Commission to January 31, 1968.

The passage of the Civil Rights Act made irreversible all that had gone before in the Negro's quest for equality. It brought to a close a decade during which more gains had been made than in any similar period since the Civil War. By July, 1964, the civil rights revolution had quickened school integration in the South and had launched a determined effort in the North to end *de facto* school segregation. It had fostered countless employment opportunities, the integration of public facilities, and the organization of numerous biracial committees to end local inequalities.

Nevertheless, old problems remained and new ones loomed. Negro ghettos in the great city areas continued to grow as racial restrictions barred Negroes from moving into other communities. At the same time, the ongoing white exodus to the suburbs was further complicating the programs and financial problems of city administrations. As demonstrations continued, there was talk of a "white backlash" – an almost inevitable consequence of the Negro's new militancy. And, as civil rights workers began a concerted attack against bigotry in Mississippi, there was ample reason to believe that violence would again occur.

The civil rights leaders who hailed the passage of the Civil Rights Act knew, of course, that laws do not change the human heart; nevertheless, the measure's enactment brought them the satisfaction of knowing that the federal government now supported them in their major demands. They recognized that the law would not smash the walls of segregated slums, or erase the inherited handicaps of undereducation or poverty, or create new and better jobs in a period when automation was snuffing out thousands and thousands of unskilled posts. There was no guarantee, moreover, that apathy would not destroy the work of years in advancing the Negro to his birthright of freedom. Progress had certainly been made, but racism continued to hover over the American nation.

* * * * *

For three and a half centuries, American Negroes have been inextricably involved in the nation's development. Though isolated from the mainstream of American life, they have made substantial contributions to America's economic, political, and social growth. While striving to overcome the barriers that confronted them, they have helped to shape a striking cultural legacy for future generations.

Historically, the American Negro community has been a sensitive barometer of the extent to which America has fulfilled her pledge of freedom. America's history may be viewed as a saga of man's progress from degradation to liberty. By participating in a war against slavery and bigotry, and by constantly reminding their nation of its commitment to freedom, Negroes have helped to redeem the promise of American life.

Though the Negro's present quest for equality is truly a revolutionary development, it is rooted in the experiences of the past, in centuries of enslavement, oppression, and violence. The very fact that it is taking place is testimony of progress. Our free institutions, the diversity of our people, and our democratic heritage are basic ingredients in the current civil rights revolution. Though no balance sheet can ignore the disparities that continue to impede the Negro's advancement, the growing awareness that inequities exist bodes well for the future. There can be little doubt but that racial justice will be achieved. When it is, this nation will gain an extra measure of greatness.

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